

An Essential Point in Good Marketing

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IT was an interesting group that gathered together in front of the Norfolk county exhibit at the last Horticultural Fair in Toronto; interesting because it represented the two classes concerned, the producers and the consumers. With representatives of these two classes whose interests are so often considered antagonistic, with the fruit all around them, the remarks exchanged are apt to be enlightening. I joined the group.

"Yes, we are getting marketing down to a science in our county," the Norfolk man was saying. "Practically all the growers worth considering have joined our association and we have put the old-time apple buyer out of business. As we progress we will probably go even further towards eliminating the middleman: and that will be of advantage to you as well as to me," he added turning to the City Man who stood at my right. "Cooperation is the whole thing for both of us."

The Norfolk man's enthusiasm when he spoke on cooperation was contagious, but the City Man still looked doubtful. "Don't you think," he suggested, "that you are putting cooperation on a pedestal that is a trifle too high? I don't know much about fruit, but I do know something about marketing and I should say that the very first essential for the consideration of the grower is to produce and pack fruit that will be most satisfactory to the consumer. If you don't please the consumer then your cooperation will be all for nought."

Finding that his audience was interested, the City Man was encouraged to continue. "I can remember," he said, "when fruit and apples were almost synonymous terms. We had to buy apples or go without fruit. You fruit growers have now more competition. Bananas can now be had at very reasonable prices, thanks to the pedlar, at any time of the year. Oranges too have gotten down where they are within the reach of everyone in moderately good circumstances. If apples are not put up to suit us we have bananas and oranges to fall back on."

"But aren't we putting the apples up to suit you?" interposed the Norfolk man.

"No, you are not," was the immediate retort. "I should judge from this show that you have discovered the value of the box pack for displaying your fruit at the fair. You haven't got wise to its value as a market package. You send your commissions abroad to study cooperation. I have never heard of a commission coming to Toronto to study the way people live. Take myself for instance. I, my wife and two children live in a flat of four rooms. Our kitchen is not as big as the ordinary farm pantry. Where could we store a barrel of apples? We can handle a box quite nicely. We can stand it up on end and use it for a seat if stuck for room. The whole tendency of city life nowadays is more and more towards the flat. I'll guarantee that while the majority of people in my city can handle a box of apples nicely there is not one in five that wants a barrel. How do you pack your apples?"

The Norfolk man admitted that the most of them went into barrels.

"When you get your cooperation down so fine that you want to get right next the consumer," remarked the City Man as he turned away, "you will have to change to the box."

It was later in the day that I ran across the Western Man. Here it was even more

natural that we should talk fruit as it turned out that he was a large dealer in Saskatoon. Strangely enough in his first remark he struck exactly the same chord as the City Man had done.

"Do you know," he said, "that the fruit growers of British Columbia, Oregon and Washington are ousting the Ontario producer from the prairie markets just because they are not meeting the consumers' demands. I am afraid that your Ontario men don't study the consumer as much as they should."

The Western Man was full of his subject. When I asked him for his ideas on packing and meeting the consumers' demands generally he was right ready to talk.

"Ontario fruit men," said he, "would be wise to adopt a standard box of about sixty or seventy pounds for the apples and harder pears. For many reasons the box is preferred. The barrels from my standpoint as a dealer are altogether unsatisfactory. They are too heavy for one person to

handle and have to be rolled or dropped to the place required.

"Then take the consumer's side of it," the Western Man continued. "Many people prefer to buy two or three kinds of apples or one or two boxes of apples and one box of pears. Or they may be driving many miles into the country with a buggy, in which a box of pears or apples is all they can accommodate. Another and altogether too frequent reason why the box is preferred, is that many have only \$2 or \$2.50 which they feel they can spare to buy apples. All of these appeal to me as valid reasons why the producer should comply with the requirements of the consumer."

The Western Man had much more to say. He talked of dishonest packing, of unattractive packages and of the shipping of poor varieties. But all of his talk came back to the same point—the demands of the consumer must be considered first. He had spent all of his business life dealing directly with the consumer. He knew what they wanted and realized even more keenly than does the grower, that the most essential point in marketing is to market so as to please the man who must pay the price for the product.

Canadian Peaches on the British Market

J. A. Ruddick, Dairy and Cold Storage Commissioner, Ottawa.

There is a market for a considerable quantity of peaches in Great Britain if they are properly packed and shipped just in the right condition under careful supervision. If that market were the only outlet Ontario peach growers have in addition to the local market it would probably be developed to a considerable extent, but with the Northwest market available, and constantly expanding, the attention of the growers is naturally turned in that direction. I am of the opinion that the returns on the whole from the West will be quite as satisfactory as any from the Old Country.

Mr. C. A. Dobson, who has been the largest shipper of peaches to Great Britain, is turning his attention to the northwest trade, and Mr. Dobson has been as successful in his shipments to the Old Country as any one could hope to be. I have not been able to learn any particulars of the financial returns from Mr. Dobson's shipments, but I presume they have been fairly satisfactory, or he would not have continued to make shipments year after year.

As far as the actual transportation of the peaches is concerned we feel that we have now pretty accurate information.

To thoroughly test the market for Canadian peaches in Great Britain, as described in one of our bulletins, the department made a few trial shipments in 1910 in order to procure accurate data respecting the proper degree of maturity at picking time, the best method of packing, proper temperatures during transportation, etc., especially as the acreage under peaches in Ontario has been increasing rapidly in recent years.

It was decided to make shipments during the weeks ending September 17, 24 and October 1, to London, Liverpool and Glasgow, and one shipment to Bristol on September 15. In all twelve hundred and eighty-four cases were shipped.

All the peaches were closely watched by our cargo inspectors at Montreal. Care was taken to see that the peaches were promptly loaded in the steamers and that proper care was exercised in handling the packages and in stowing them in the cham-

bers. The cases were well dunnaged in the steamers (by dunnage is meant the placing of strips of wood between the tiers of cases, both horizontally and vertically, so as to insure a good circulation of air) and thermographs were placed in each chamber. At London, Liverpool, Glasgow and Bristol our inspectors were also on the alert, and remarkably quick deliveries were made.

All the peaches shipped by the department were disposed of by private sale, excepting the two Liverpool lots of fifty-one and one hundred and two cases, which were sold under the hammer. Cardiff made the highest price, viz., 6s. 6d. (\$1.58) per case of 23 'Crawford' peaches, while the highest average price received was \$1.45 per case for 72 cases 'Old Mixon,' sold in London. At the same time 78 cases of 'Elbertas' made an average of \$1.39. In Cardiff 25 cases 'Crawfords' averaged \$1.30 per case; Manchester made \$1.33 per case for 12 cases, and Leeds \$1.22. On the other hand 198 cases 'Elbertas' sold in London for 94 cents per case, 24 cases sold in Birmingham for 83 cents per case, and 177 cases in Glasgow for 85½ cents per case. The whole shipment of 1,284 cases sold at an average of \$1.04 per case, while the charges averaged as follows:—

Freight from St. Catharines to Montreal, four cents per case; ocean freight, 96 cents; selling charges in Great Britain, including commission, 9.7 cents; total charges, 23.3 cents per case, leaving an average net return f.o.b. cars St. Catharines of 80.7 cents per case, or about 13½ cents a pound. From this must be deducted of course the cost of the package, packing material and extra labor.

It is obvious that if any plan can be devised whereby the chilling of fruit can be accomplished in a few hours instead of taking days, the fruit will carry much farther and in a better condition.—J. A. Ruddick, Dairy and Cold Storage Commissioner.

The bulk of our apples are sold in grocery stores and every buyer knows what a barrel contains. I should like to see a standard barrel for Ontario.—Eben James.