

Fruit Growing in Eastern Nova Scotia

Andrew MacPherson, Rocklin

EVERYONE who is interested in fruit growing has heard of and many have seen the Annapolis and Cornwallis Valleys in Nova Scotia and, when apples are mentioned in connection with the province, those districts are supposed to contain all that is worth mentioning in the shape of fruit and when the various institute speakers from this so-called "fruit belt" go ahead, they cannot disguise a sort of sympathetic pity for those that are trying to grow fruit under conditions more adverse than is to be met with in their own beloved valleys.

Up to a few years ago, no one ventured to dispute the theory that the Valleys were "it," as far as fruit and all that belongeth thereto was concerned, but when the late B. W. Chipman was appointed Secretary for Agriculture he conceived the idea of establishing model or experimental orchards in each county of the province outside of the fruit belt. Prof. F. C. Sears, who was then director of horticulture, and Mr. Chipman travelled over the province and observed that in many other localities fruit of equally high quality was grown. This was noticeable particularly in Pictou and Antigonish counties, which are in the eastern part of the province. Professor Sears told the writer that he never saw a better display of fruit, chiefly apples, than was to be seen at Pictou County Exhibition of 1905. But what contributed more than anything else to the idea of experimental orchards was the fact

that varieties that succeeded best in one district did not succeed so well in another, and instead of selecting and holding to the variety that does the best, too often the farmer allowed the tree agent

cut down the few trees that had not died already, saying that they were in the way of the mowing machine. To select the varieties that are likely to do best in a district under a ten year experiment, is



A Government Spraying Demonstration in a Nova Scotia Orchard

Photograph kindly furnished by Mr. G. H. Vroom, Dominion Fruit Inspector.

to select for him, and this was done without any regard for environment, and the result was confusion.

A farmer who had perhaps a half acre or, say, one acre in orchard had perhaps a dozen different varieties growing there. Great care would be taken of this orchard for a few years and when the time for fruit arrived and no fruit appeared or, if fruit, not the kind that was expected, the owner of the orchard got careless and allowed the grass to grow, with the result in a short time the owner

the idea of the model orchard. The experiment is carried on under Government supervision about as follows:

THE MODEL ORCHARD METHOD.

A plot of land of about two acres is selected. The trees are set out thirty-three feet apart each way and fillers in between, thus the trees are sixteen and a half feet by thirty-three feet apart. The fillers consist of plum, pear and cherry trees. A strip of land eight feet wide is left at every row of trees. This is cultivated until the middle of July when each strip is then seeded to a cover crop of clover, rape or vetches, to be plowed under the following spring and the same plan followed.

Now as to results. First.—Varieties that are succeeding best in the model orchard are the ones generally selected in that neighborhood with equally good results.

Second.—The idea is losing ground, that an apple orchard in order to be profitable must necessarily raise a crop of hay or grain. In the model orchard no such crop is permissible, but a cultivated crop, such as corn, potatoes, turnips or something similar, is allowed.

Third.—The value of a clean cultivated orchard is observed, if best results are to be obtained.

One of the maxims laid down by Professor Sears when setting out these orchards was, "Make haste slowly," and in some cases the advice was needed as the desire to have the best orchard led to an undue forcing, by heavy manuring, causing intense wood growth with the usual result of winter-killing during severe winters.

Judging from the experience of the



One of the Model Orchards in Nova Scotia that are Destined to Stimulate Fruit Growing in that Province
Orchard of Mr. H. M. Rice, Bear River, Digby County