

placed upon the market an exceedingly poor grade of apple. As has been pointed out frequently, the average buyer has poor facilities for disposing of his culls and lower grades. The temptation, therefore, is very strong—too strong to be resisted in many cases—to include inferior apples with the better grades, and to pack everything in the orchard, with the hope of getting some price for the poorer qualities. But inspectors, under the Fruit Marks Act, have frequently drawn attention to the fact that the packages upon which they are obliged to make an adverse report were very frequently from these "lump" orchards.

It is said by the buyers that sometimes, when the orchard is bought by the "lump," the growers are very careless of the fruit after the sale. Stock are allowed to break in and eat all the fruit in their reach. No precautions are taken against theft, if it is not actually invited, nor can the buyers depend in all cases on proper protection in case of frost or other contingency. Of course, the buyer is the loser in these particular cases, but he provides for this in the average price he gives. The losses, therefore, in the last analysis, do not fall altogether upon those who are responsible for them, but upon the whole body of apple-growers who sell in this way.

SELLING BY THE BARREL.

In selling by the barrel, the grower is often defrauded by a very simple device on the part of the packer if he does not do his own picking and packing. The packer will set a very high standard for his No. 1's, with the result that the grower will find probably not more than ten per cent. of his orchard product graded No. 1. The standard of the No. 2's will also be high, making a large percentage of culls. The bargain, as understood by the grower, presumed the ordinary grading; but there being no written contract, the buyer usually has his own way. Of course, the presumption is that these apples are afterwards remarked, but if not, they are sent to special customers, where their extra quality will secure an extra price.

On the other hand, buyers are sometimes deceived by their own packers. These packers, by personal friendship, or by direct bribery, are induced by the grower to put in a poorer quality of fruit than the grade would call for. There is no possibility of a proper inspection by the buyer in most cases, and these packages go forward to the market bearing the buyer's brand, that are, nevertheless, fraudulently marked by his subordinate. The fraudulent nature of the marking is not discovered until it is too late to punish the perpetrator of the offence, even if it were possible to identify him. The various packs are mixed in such a way that it is not often that the individual workman can be properly identified. It will thus be seen that the method of buying apples is a hazardous one both for the buyer and the seller, and should be replaced by something better.

CO-OPERATION AND THE FRUIT MERCHANT.

In a great many cases the co-operative associations have been vigorously assailed by the apple-buyers, and in some cases by the commission merchants. It is taken for granted that the co-operative associations will eliminate the middleman. This is only partially true. Co-operative associations will reduce the number of middlemen, undoubtedly. This is in the interest both of the grower and the legitimate fruit merchant. The middleman who will be dispensed with is, in most cases, unnecessary to the legitimate fruit merchant, as well as to the grower. The co-operative associations do not aim to sell to the consumer direct. They appreciate the fact that there is an absolute necessity for the fruit merchant to come in direct contact with the consumer. Their only object is to reach this fruit merchant as directly as possible. This direct selling will undoubtedly prove a very great benefit to growers, merchants and consumers. A secondary object of the co-operative association is undoubtedly to prevent an unscrupulous buyer from playing off one weak-kneed grower against his neighbor, for the purpose of lowering the price of the fruit below its actual value.

THE VALUE OF A GUARANTEE.

Confidence in the uniformity and honesty of the quality and grading of the fruit is the basis of successful trade. The buyer must be perfectly confident that the box which he is getting is exactly as the markings upon the outside would indicate, and the package should be so marked that it would describe accurately the fruit which it contains. It should also have marks to indicate whether the packer or the shipper was to blame. It is, of course, distinctly understood that where the fruit is not as represented, for any reason, the association will make good. A guarantee of this kind that is faithfully carried out will require, of course, protection on the part of the association. They will have to adopt devices against unscrupulous buyers who may make false reports. Wherever it is possible, a trusted individual makes personal examination. Where that is not possible, the fruit is taken out of the hands of the person complaining, immediately and completely, even where it is sold for less than the per-

son complaining is willing to give for it. By making this rule, trivial complaints are not likely to be made. Until the brand becomes well known, it is certainly a good advertising device to place a slip in each package, stating clearly the association's guarantee. These slips may, in all such cases, carry the number of the packer as well.

SELLING BY COMMISSION.

There are different methods of selling fruit. The perishable nature of fruit, and the uncertainty in the quantity and in the quality of it until it is packed ready for market, makes it very difficult to sell, except by consignment. Consigning fruit is a necessary evil, as the fruit trade is organized at the present time. One of the objects of organization among fruit-growers is to do away with this method of selling, except to a very limited degree. It is perfectly true that there are many reputable commission merchants whose record for fair dealing is unimpeachable. On the other hand, there is scarcely a fruit-grower in the business to-day who has not suffered severely in consequence of too great a trust in the commission business. It is absolutely impossible for the average fruit-grower to tell whether he has been dealt with fairly or not. He cannot audit the accounts, nor follow his fruit to the next purchaser, and he is practically obliged to take the word of the commission man for all facts connected with the sale of his fruit. He says, in fact, to the commission man, "Here is my fruit, give me what you please for it." It would be strange, indeed, if some commission men did not yield to the temptation and send returns far below what was received for the fruit. It is not a question of the responsibility of the commission merchant. His standing may be high in financial circles, but if he wishes to be dishonest, he need not want for a plausible excuse to return almost any sum to the grower. The first device is to report the fruit arriving in bad condition. This is usually accompanied by a request for instructions how to deal with the fruit. The fruit-grower, hundreds of miles away, and exceedingly busy with the remainder of the crop, can only reply, "Do the best you can with it." Not unfrequently the commission merchant even reports that the sales did not equal the charges, and asks the fruit-grower to remit a further amount.

But, presuming that the commission man is perfectly honest, and has done his best with the fruit, the system is yet a very bad one. There is no regulation of the amount of fruit which is shipped to any particular point. There may be twice or three times as much fruit as the market can absorb at profitable prices, yet the commission merchant is obliged to lower his price until his sales take place.

The evils are still worse where the commission merchant also buys upon his own account. Then he is sure to push his own goods first, and hold the goods sold on commission for the poorer market, probably after it has seriously deteriorated by the delay in selling.

Another evil has been frequently commented upon. Goods on consignment can be used very effectively to undermine the trade of a competitor not in the same combination with the commission merchant. It frequently happens that a stranger appears in the city with a few carloads of fruit, which he endeavors to sell. This, of course, is an invasion of the territory of the merchants already established there. But if they were obliged to meet the competition of this newcomer with their own goods, they might hesitate before they lowered the price so as not to yield a profit. But where they have goods on consignment, they have no hesitation in forcing this upon the market, with the object of lowering the price below the legitimate point upon the newcomer's fruit.

These evils alone would be sufficient to condemn sales upon consignment. All these evils are intensified where the sales are made by auction. In such cases, not unfrequently there is an easy combination of buyers that limits the price so as to give them an unwarranted profit on their sales.

SELLING BY TENDER.

Selling by tender is an excellent plan after a reputation has been established. This plan is adopted by the Hood River (Oregon) Apple-growers' Union, and also by some of the Ontario associations. This method is only possible where the organization is fairly perfect. The manager must know very definitely the quantity of fruit which he has for sale, and the quality of it. Of course, this would be impossible without very stringent rules both as to the growing of the fruit and the selling of it. It is reported that the Hood River people, selling by this method, have been able to raise the price of their apples from 80 cents per box to \$2.00 per box.

It takes a number of years to secure an organization, as well as a reputation, consequently this is probably not the best method of selling for new organizations.

DIRECT BUYING.

Whatever method of disposing of the stock is adopted, it may be taken for granted that the only safe way is to sell at the point of production.

A more serious defect of all these methods is that the interest of the buyer in an orchard does not continue from year to year, and does not begin early enough in the season to permit him to improve the crop in any way.

The methods of harvesting and selling account, in some degree, for the want of improvement in orchard culture in all its branches. This want of improvement is, of course, intimately associated with small profits. Indeed, so small have been the returns from certain sections of the country, that in years of low prices thousands of bushels of good apples, and those that might have been good with proper care, have been allowed to go to waste.

INTRODUCTION OF THE CO-OPERATIVE METHOD.

It was with the object of providing at least a partial remedy for the evils above referred to that the co-operative method of selling apples was first adopted. The experiment has been, to a certain extent, successful. In Ontario, the original purpose of organization was for the combining of a number of small lots of fall apples into car lots for shipment, with the object of securing thereby a reduction in freight charges. Each member of the original associations graded and packed his own apples, while the selling was entrusted to one of the members having a business connection in Western Canada or some of the large commercial centers. The adoption of this method was the means, undoubtedly, of securing a considerable saving to the producer, but it was only a partial remedy, and related only to one of many evils, namely, a high freight rate. Among the disadvantages which it failed to mitigate were, a lack of uniformity in grading that militated against good prices, and the absence of general interest among fruit-growers, and of incentive to secure many much-needed improvements. It was decided, therefore, by the pioneers of the movement to obtain more formal organization and added definiteness of aim by incorporation. It was found, in the case of Ontario, where the movement for co-operation originated, that legislation sufficiently comprehensive in character to meet the needs of the situation was already on the statute books of the Province, in the form of an Act passed in 1900 to provide for the incorporation of co-operative cold-storage associations, and up to the present time no additional legislation has been sought, with the exception of one or two amendments to the Act passed during the present year to secure its adaptation to the requirements of the developed form of the association.

A CHANGE IN FRUIT PROSPECTS.

Speaking from the Niagara District, a great change is evident in the fruit crop. The long-continued drouth in some parts very much lessened the strawberry crop, which, however, has brought unusually good prices. The cherry crop is very short, so much of the fruit has blighted and dropped. We are now (July 5th) harvesting Governor Woods, which are only about one-third of a crop. The black hearts, such as Knight and Tartarian, are very scant, and so are the Yellow Spanish and the Windsor. Both the latter are, however, such large cherries that it needs but few to fill a basket. Pie cherries are a good crop, especially Dyehouse and Richmond. Currants and gooseberries promise well, but the plantations of these are much reduced. Pears are a complete failure. Bartlett and Duchess blossomed fairly well, but only an occasional pear remains firm on the trees. My orchard of Bartletts that gave over 3,000 baskets last year, will not give over 50 this year. Plums are dropping daily from the trees, and the crop will be very light. Peaches are fairly good, but a large number are evidently dropping, because not sufficiently fertilized, so the crop will not be so very large. Grapes never promised better, have set remarkably well, and will be a profitable crop this year. But, on the whole, the fruit crop promises to be short, and the prices high.

L. WOOLVERTON.

COOLING FRUIT IN CARS INSTEAD OF WAREHOUSE.

Some of our readers may have noticed newspaper mention of some experiments being made at St. Catharines, under the direction of the Dominion Dairy and Cold-storage Commissioner, to test a means of cooling refrigerator cars of fruit by means of currents of cold air. Inquiry at headquarters reveals that the announcement was premature, inasmuch as the results were still a matter of speculation. It seems that Commissioner Ruddick has devised an arrangement for utilizing the cold-air currents of a mechanical-cold-storage warehouse for cooling cars placed alongside the warehouse. The idea is to load the fruit directly into the car, instead of putting it first into the warehouse to be chilled, thus saving considerable time and handling of the fruit, as well as protecting it from the accumulation of moisture, which condenses when it (the fruit) is being transferred from the cold warehouse to the car. "The idea is not exactly a new one,"