

GARDEN ORCHARD.

CANNED TOMATOES AND THE RETAILERS.

With reference to the canning industry of Canada, the opinions of retailers, or the men who pass the goods on to the consumer, are interesting. Naturally, they wish to do the maximum amount of business. The greater the number of cans of tomatoes they hand out to consumers, the more businesslike it seems to them, provided they can make a reasonable profit in doing so. In other words, the retailer prefers to sell at a reasonably low price, since that factor has much to do with quantities disposed of. The counter price of a few years ago (three cans for a quarter) was within the reach of all, and large quantities of tomatoes in three-pound tins found ready purchasers every season. A steady annual increase in consumption was noticed, and the producers of the raw product had an ever-widening outlet for the product of their tomato areas. Everyone seemed to be comparatively well satisfied with conditions. Growers considered that, since they did the bulk of the work, they should get higher prices, but the promise of a keener demand had a tendency to keep down complaint.

In those days, the three-pound tins of tomatoes were supplied retailers at 70 cents to 80 cents a dozen, and some grocers aver that they purchased them below those figures. On the plea that increased cost of labor and other expenses left no profit, the price has been advanced, until retailers have been forced to pay as high as \$1.35 per dozen or cease handling the goods. In a few instances no orders were given. With this advance at the selling end, it would be expected that the grower should receive some extra allowance for increased capital in land of higher value, and for labor, which costs him more. But does this advance of 30 cents to 60 cents or more a dozen find a corresponding advance in price for the raw product? In some cases a slight raise has been experienced, but it is, very slight, compared with the increase to the retailer who wishes to sell at the former price of three tins for a quarter, and thus increase the volume of his business.

"Canned tomatoes should be bought at 85 cents a dozen for three-pound tins," said a prominent retailer in Toronto to a representative of "The Farmer's Advocate," recently. "This would allow us to retail them at three for 25 cents. We used to get these goods at 70 cents to 75 cents a dozen, laid down. The extra 10 cents should be sufficient to cover increases in cost of labor, etc. Instead of that, in 1906 and 1907 we have been obliged to pay \$1.17½ to \$1.27½. This year the price has been dropped to \$1.00. Independent factories are opening, and, besides, some retailers refused to buy goods at such exorbitant prices and under conditions arranged to the manufacturer's advantage in every particular. A representative of the manufacturer comes around in the spring to ascertain how many dozen or how many cases will be required. The price is not set until they are ready to deliver the goods in the fall or early winter. The retailer is obliged to take every can ordered, but if the company feels inclined to hold back, he need deliver only 60 per cent. of the order. They do their best to hold the price up, but sometimes come down when it is realized that the retailer can do better elsewhere. Independent companies give slightly better figures. As a rule, the difference runs about 10 per cent. But the difficulty is that many consumers demand a recognized brand, and the new company finds it hard to dispose of its output. Besides, some representatives of the big firms do all they can to injure the smaller companies when they are among the retailers."

In reply to a question as to increased sales with the price at three for 25 cents, this retailer said: "I could sell at least 25 per cent. more goods if they were put into me at 80 cents or 85 cents than I can when I pay \$1.15 or higher. At present, the customer buys other goods to take the place of tomatoes, but the tendency is to depress trade by lessening consumption."

"In regard to canned goods," said another prominent retailer of Toronto, "we are at the mercy of the canners. In years gone by I have bought tomatoes as low as 50 cents for a dozen three-pound tins. Within the past few years the price has gone as high as \$1.35. They take the order in the spring, while the crop is still un-grown in the field, and guarantee that the price will be all right, but in the fall the price is set dependent on the pack. If the supply is limited, the price is put up. I consider that 80 to 90 cents a dozen should be fair for all concerned. I would think that the canner could pay the grower at least 30 cents a bushel, and we could sell at three cans for a quarter. Last year's prices were so outrageous that about 50 per cent. of the trade couldn't buy. The result was a decreased consumption. One would think the canners want four or five factories to run the business, and, in doing that, to take the profit from both farmer and retailer."

"It is a difficult situation to remedy. I believe there are many retailers who prefer to support independent factories. These might join together to guarantee the co-operative factory a market for their goods, which can be bought at 10 per cent. reduction. If, however, the canners continue the high prices, the Government should remove the duty from canned goods. Evidences of a combine should be sufficient to allow goods to come in free of duty."

"But, with all the advance in prices, the producer has to be content with the old figure. The canners still claim they can't afford to pay more than 25 cents, or, at most, 35 cents a bushel for tomatoes. Surely, with an increased return of about half a dollar on a dozen cans, they could arrange to pay the man who does the work a little more. But perhaps the grower is making sufficient profit if he gets 30 cents a bushel. What we want is high-class stuff at a reasonable price. If I got my tomatoes at 80 cents or 85 cents a dozen for three-pound tins, I could sell fully one-third more than I dispose of when they cost \$1.15 or \$1.20, or higher."

London retailers, also, were interviewed by "The Farmer's Advocate." Similar complaints were given. It was considered that high prices curtailed the canned-tomato business by 30 or 35 per cent. One grocer said that, while he could buy at lower prices from independent companies, they usually advanced their figures, keeping them about five cents a dozen below those of the bigger companies.

This is the opinion of men whose sole duty it is to dispose of the goods made by the canners from the raw product of the farmer. To them, the price should be a matter of little or no concern, provided they sell sufficient quantities at such advance over cost as would pay them to handle the goods. The questions of greatest import are: Does the producer get enough to repay him for growing the crop? Do the canners have a reasonable margin for manufacturing and placing the goods in retail stores? Are retailers in a position to sell at such figures as will result in the maximum consumption, after giving a fair profit to growers and canners, as well as to themselves?

METHODS IN APPLE ORCHARD.

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate":

Apple-growing may be treated under four heads, viz.: Propagation, Training, Pruning, Cultivation. The first, propagation, again, may be considered under four heads, according to methods adopted, viz.: From seed—the method usually adopted by nurserymen when raising new varieties; from cuttings; by budding, usually in July; and by grafting, in April.

As to training, apple trees may be induced to grow in almost any shape or form. A start should be made with the maiden stage (or one year's growth from the graft) for the desired shape. If for pyramid, prune away all but three main branches, viz., a leader, and two side ones. Afterwards, shorten these to about three buds; then treat the second-year growth in a similar way. Always be careful to leave outward branches of each year's growth, to be cut back to about six inches, the idea being to have fruit spurs set as quickly as possible. The leader of each year's growth must be higher than the branches. This form is used very largely in the fruit-growing districts of England.

In training for bush form, prune to get three main branches, as in pyramid shape, but prune back the central one, instead of allowing it to grow too long. Also leave the middle of the tree perfectly open, in the third year having probably six or eight branches, the idea being to induce each to branch at about equal distances all round, so that each branch gets its share of light and air. The fruit will be larger and of better color, and is more easily got at. Besides, a larger number of trees can be set on an acre.

Cordons are developed by training so that fruit hangs like onions on a string. The object in having this form is to allow no branch to grow, but to restrict it to its formal shape. They can be used to cover unsightly walls, if number 12 wire be used, about 15 inches apart. Farm walls are a valuable asset to this purpose. This form lends itself to arches or borders. If on walls, the slope should be about 45 degrees, and the trees should be planted about 18 inches apart. Prune to make the buds break close to the graft, and get every bud to form a fruit spur. In winter prune back to two buds, and avoid any waste wood. If more than one apple forms at a spur, it will be necessary to thin.

Pruning is an art acquired by training, practice and observation. Each variety should be treated on its merits, the objects of pruning being to give the tree more light and air, to remove superfluous wood, and to obtain better samples of fruit. The knife should not be spared on young trees.

Regarding cultural methods, the ground should be well prepared by trenching. Great care should be taken in planting, and manure never should

be applied to the roots when planting, but as a top-dressing afterwards.

Lime and salt makes a good spraying mixture for moss-covered trees. A satisfactory spray, also, may be made by using caustic soda (or potash), soft soap and paraffin, and using at the rate of a wineglass for a gallon of water. Canker can be treated by cutting out clean and painting the wound with Stockholm tar. E. J. H. York Co., Ont.

[Note.—The above article, from an English gardener, is not without interest to our horticultural readers, although the methods described would not be considered practical by orchards of the leading fruit districts in Canada.—Editor.]

PROSPECTS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA.

"What are the prospects for success in growing fruit in British Columbia by three young English clerks, with a combined capital of about \$1,000?" A. T. A."

The presumption is that these three young men have not been used to manual labor. It is just possible, too, that they have inherited a prejudice against manual labor. If so, their chances of success are nil. If they are still young, say not above thirty, and are willing to spend at least one year as an apprenticeship, working for fruit-growers in British Columbia, and using their opportunities for observing the quality of the land, the situation and the possibilities of irrigation, if it is in the dry belt, there is no reason why they should not succeed. There are opportunities in several parts of British Columbia for young men who are willing to work with their hands as well as with their heads.

The best time, of course, is to be in British Columbia to begin work in the early spring months, so that the full year's routine would be fully mastered; but there is work at all seasons on the British Columbia fruit ranch, with the exception of a short time in winter.

Such men are especially cautioned not to invest their money until they have been some time in the country. The real-estate agents are almost as thick in British Columbia as fruit trees in an orchard, and it requires some little experience in the country to balance the opportunities so as to invest wisely. A. McNEILL.

THE FARM BULLETIN.

To Our Club-raisers.

There are thousands of farmers who do not know what they are losing every year through not being subscribers to "The Farmer's Advocate and Home Magazine." Therefore, we want all readers of "The Farmer's Advocate" to act as club-raisers this year, and send us large lists of NEW SUBSCRIBERS.

If you send us two new names and \$3.00 to cover same (each new subscriber paying \$1.50), we will mark date on your paper forward one year as remuneration to you; or, for each single NEW NAME, accompanied by \$1.50, we will advance the date of your address label six months. Cash commissions or premiums, as preferred, for larger lists of new names.

In clubs of FOUR RENEWALS OR OVER, we will accept \$1.25 each.

Premiums not included in club offers.

Start raising your club immediately. Get "The Farmer's Advocate and Home Magazine" into every household in your locality.

NOW FOR THE WINTER FAIR.

The Ontario Winter Fair at Guelph, to be held this year on the dates, December 7th to 11th, should appeal to farmers' families from a wide range of the Province, as a favorable opportunity of seeing a great show of stock, alive and in the dressed carcass; also, the greatest display of live and dressed poultry to be seen at any show of the sort in America. The illustrated lectures by experienced farmers, breeders and teachers in the lecture hall, in the same building as the stock show, and all for the one admission fee of 25 cents, constitute an educational advantage to farmers such as can nowhere else be obtained at so little cost. For information regarding cheap railway rates and programme of judging and lectures, see pages 1802 and 1803 of "The Farmer's Advocate" for November 26th, and other columns in this issue.