

Handling and Shipping Fruit via Montreal

The Second of a Series of Articles by the Staff Representative of the Canadian Horticulturist, who this Summer Visited Great Britain in the Interests of Canadian Fruit Growers and of this Paper

THE conditions under which Canadian fruit is handled by the steamship companies while in transit are, on the whole, very satisfactory. It is gratifying to find that this is the case, as the proper transport-

favorably impressed with the manner in which the steamship company cared for its load and with the treatment accorded to the perishable products of which it consisted after it reached London. There is room, however, for great improvement in the care given our produce at other ports, such as Liverpool, Manchester and Glasgow.

An important factor in successful transportation is to keep the fruit at a uniform temperature from the time it is picked until it is sold. This has been demonstrated to the sorrow of some of our growers in western Ontario, in shipping fruit via New York. At that port the fruit is transferred from the freight sheds to the steamer on the decks of small boats. On these it is exposed to the sun and weather and then placed in the hold at a temperature often of 75 degrees. Having been picked and shipped at a temperature much lower, the rise and subsequent fall in temperature on board has a very damaging effect. Although a lower freight rate may have been secured, it seldom compensated for the loss occasioned in marketing by the inferior condition of the fruit; it did not net the shipper as much as had it been shipped by the all-Canadian route. Apples shipped via

the temperatures of much of the produce before it is loaded on the vessels and note the condition of the packages and produce, but this year they are placing thermographs in the holds of every steamer leaving Montreal for Great Britain. These thermographs keep an accurate, automatic record of the temperatures maintained each day of the voyage. In Great Britain, inspectors of the department again inspect the cargoes as they are unloaded, test the temperature of the produce and record the percentage of broken boxes and damaged fruit. This work has had a far-reaching effect, as shown by the great improvements that have been made in recent years in the methods of handling and shipping perishable products.

THE THOMSON LINE

Not being an expert in cold storage matters, some points may have escaped our attention that an expert would have caught, but we feel free to say that we were most favorably impressed by the careful manner in which the officials of the Thomson Line handled and looked after the cargo of the vessel on which we sailed. This care was given, not only to the products while being loaded, but during the course of the voyage and throughout the process of unloading on the other side. This line, in fact, appears to have brought these matters very near to the point of perfection.

From information gained, not only from officials of the company, but from exporters in Canada and importers in Great Britain, the Thomson Steamship Co. are said to have been the pioneers in every forward movement made to enable the Canadian shippers to land their produce in Great Britain in satisfactory condition. They are said to carry more fruit from Canada than any other company, and have the name of being the most careful, the quickest and most obliging company in the Canadian trade to London. The company has the exclusive right to discharge the cargoes of its vessels into the new Canadian Produce Warehouses (West) at Surrey Commercial docks. These warehouses are the best equipped in Great Britain.

The accompanying illustrations, secured last year, give a good idea of the manner in which the fruit is unloaded from the drays to the wharf, and the barrels lowered into the hold.

It will be seen that large mattresses are used on which to land the barrels, so that the fruit will not be bruised or injured in any way when loading or unloading.

The vessel is divided into compartments in



Unloading on Wharf from Teams

ation of fruit from the orchard in Canada to the salesrooms of Great Britain, is an important factor in the development of our export trade. On the manner of transportation largely rests the ultimate profit or loss of the venture. It should be such that the same care is taken as in the production of the fruit, but, until comparatively recent years the reverse has been in evidence.

One of the chief objects we had in view in visiting Great Britain was to ascertain the conditions under which perishable products are handled by the steamship companies. It was unfortunate that business arrangements necessitated the trip being taken at a season when fruit was not being exported. On the other hand large quantities of cheese and butter were being handled in the cold storage compartments of the vessel. The care given these articles gave us a good idea of the manner in which our fruit exports would be handled later in the season.

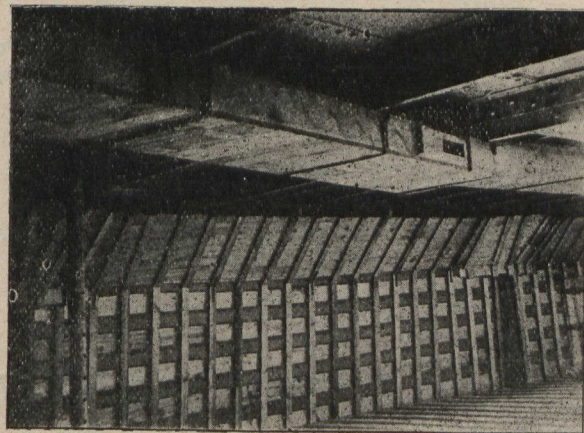
We all know, as has been shown repeatedly in THE CANADIAN HORTICULTURIST, that on this side of the Atlantic much of our fruit is not picked at the proper stage of maturity, that often it is left in piles in the orchard at the mercy of the weather, and that frequently it reaches the steamer in a condition unfit for safe carriage. The Markets Division of the Dominion Department of Agriculture, established by Prof. Jas. W. Robertson, and now ably managed by Mr. W. W. Moore, has done and is doing excellent work towards bringing about an improvement in everything connected with the shipping of fruit. Naturally, however, when we have not reached perfection in our methods on this side, we cannot say much if we find some points to criticize in the handling of our products by the steamship companies, and by those who are responsible for its care after it reaches the wharves in Great Britain.

In anything we may say on this subject, however, we are perfectly well aware that "one swallow does not make a summer," and that it would not be safe to draw any sweeping conclusions after accompanying and watching the handling of only one steamship load of produce. On the other hand we feel that what we saw during our trip was sufficient to give a general idea of the manner in which much of our fruit is handled, and to enable us to draw some conclusions therefrom. On the whole we were very



Lowering Apples into Hold

Montreal are delivered in the cars direct to the wharf, and can be unloaded, under cover of the steamship company's shed, immediately into the hold of the vessel. They thus experience but slight change in temperature and are spared all unnecessary handling. That as accurate an idea as possible might be obtained of the care given perishable products by the steamship companies, arrangements were made to sail on one of the large freight boats of the Thomson Line, of which the Robt. Reford Co., of Montreal, are the agents in Canada. It thus was possible to watch the loading of the vessel, to check the temperatures maintained in the hold during the voyage, and to observe the unloading and handling on the wharves in Great Britain. In this connection mention might be drawn to the careful supervision that is given to these matters by the officials of the Markets Division of the Department of Agriculture. Not only do they obtain



Apple Storage Room Aboard Ship