

Although the past season has been disastrous to many shippers financially, yet we find a grain of comfort in the fact that the exceedingly low prices obtained in Britain have enabled a much larger class of consumers to cultivate a taste for our fruit, who in future will doubtless be willing to buy at much higher prices rather than forego the luxury. If shippers follow next season with greater care in selecting and packing they may not only redeem their financial position by high prices but gain for themselves and the country a high reputation.

It is clear that apples have not stood shipping and storing as well as usual the past season, which may be accounted for to some extent by the dry season at the growing period when moisture in the soil is so much needed. The fruit had actually commenced to ripen before attaining proper size. Orchards under cultivation suffered less than those in grass, and where a top dressing of manure had been applied, the fruit was fully up to the average of other years in all respects.

I believe apple shippers should do something in the way of experimenting with various sizes of packages. While in the past, doubtless the common barrel has been both more convenient and cheaper than any other form; I believe all those who have given the matter any attention will agree that a smaller package would be more serviceable in many ways. The half barrel has been tested and so far as I have known with much satisfaction. My own experience has been strongly in favor of the half barrel package. It is handled more easily and there is less danger of heating in the fruit. But these half barrels should be constructed so that in rolling the weight would come entirely upon the top and bottom hoops. For this purpose the Tomlinson package is superior in my estimation to anything I have seen, there being no bilge at all. The package should be made in the same way as ordinary cheese boxes.

There is room for some inventive genius to give us a more perfect package than we yet have, and the reward will certainly be a fortune.

Although some improvement has been made by railway and steamship companies in the handling and storing of apples, there is still room for improvement. One of the steamship lines plying between Montreal and Liverpool has, so far as ventilation is concerned, given the best accommodation yet prepared for apple shippers. Upon three of their vessels they have placed fans on deck. These fans are driven by steam for the purpose of driving down through large pipes an atmospheric blast to keep the compartment cool, and by the use of revolving ventilators the air is carried off around the upper part of the compartment. If that company would extend several of these air pipes around the compartment and perforate them where they pass through the bottom the cool air would be better distributed and would reach every part of the compartment. But there is another difficulty we find in most, if not all of the vessels. The space between decks allotted to fruit is too deep, when it takes ten or fifteen tiers of barrels to fill it to the top. Such a pressure is sure to injure the fruit in the lower tiers, and hence we see so many "slack and wet" in the sale lists. Certainly there are other causes for "slack and wet," but this is one that can readily be remedied.

Freight rates by through bills of lading should be considerably reduced, especially where large lots are shipped. Rates the past season were some higher than in former years. Our friends "across the line" had a decided advantage over us in lower rates by special contracts for large shipments.

A much larger trade in general fruits would be carried on with Manitoba and the Territories if rates could be reduced to a reasonable figure. Plums and early as well as late pears, grapes and tomatoes and apples would be shipped in much larger quantities than at present. Fruit cars, well ventilated should be provided similar to those supplied by the Grand Trunk in some sections, and the Canadian Pacific should convey such freight with more despatch than they do.

Express companies' charges are so excessive that only a very limited trade can be carried on at present, and ordinary freight is so slow and uncertain going to the far west that perishable goods such as I refer to could not be sent. At Portage La Prairie the past season I made a note of the following charges by the C. P. Ry., which will give an idea of what a luxury consumers must consider the products of our orchards and gardens when they are willing to pay a price to cover first cost, charges and profits. Grapes per

100 lbs.
gooseberries
original
are charged
freight
Winnipeg

It is fully
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