

# Eastern Ontario Vegetable Growers Organize

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HAVING spent a few days among market gardeners in some of the leading vegetable growing sections of Eastern Ontario for the purpose of organizing branches of the Ontario Vegetable Growers' Association, a brief outline of my trip may be of interest. Associations were formed at Ottawa, Kingston and Napanee.

I arrived at Napanee on March 23 and hunted up the vegetable growers. There are not many market gardeners here, but there are a large number of farmers engaged in growing vegetables for the canning factory. These men I found to be nursing a very sore grievance. The canning factory has been running only one season, and I was informed that about the middle of the tomato season, at the heaviest picking, the factory refused to accept delivery. These growers had no other outlet for their crop. One grower told me he turned his cows into his tomato patch; others allowed them to rot on the ground. I believe the factory people claim that since it was their first season their plant was in a partly unfinished state, and the crop came in faster than they could handle it. This year, with a completed plant and better equipment, they expect no trouble. However, the loss last year seems to have fallen entirely on the growers (as usual), their contracts with the factory apparently allowing them no redress, and it is not surprising that some of them are feeling disgusted.

I met a number of the growers at the town hall, and after talking matters over and explaining the objects of the Ontario Vegetable Growers' Association, they organized a branch and elected Mr. Vandebogart president; Mr. Thompson vice-president, and E. M. Sherman secretary-treasurer.

At Kingston I found that several were engaged in market gardening, growing vegetables for the Kingston market. Almost all decided to come in with us. I held two meetings to discuss the matter with them. At the second, for which Mayor Mowat, of Kingston, very kindly permitted us the use of his private office in the city buildings, a branch association was formed, with Robt. Bushell, of Williamsburg, president; Richard Baiden, of Portsmouth, vice-president, and C. H. Adair, of Cataraqui, secretary-treasurer.

Ottawa came next in order for organization. The growers have plenty of greenhouses. I visited several of them, including those of Robt. Bailey and H. C. Fentteman, of Ottawa South, and Frank Williams, of Billings Bridge. Mr. Fentteman was cutting cucumbers, White Spine, March 29. He showed me an arrangement of angle iron on his

greenhouse plate for the bottom pane of glass to butt against, preventing splitting by ice, that I consider an excellent device.

At Mr. Williams' I saw the largest greenhouse devoted to growing lettuce I had seen since leaving Toronto. He has a large house, 40 x 150 feet, and two others slightly smaller. The large house and one of the smaller ones are in lettuce, and the other devoted to bedding plants. The lettuce is Grand Rapids grown, mostly on solid benches, producing a first-class article.

Mr. Williams is a noted grower of the famous Montreal Nutmeg melon—that aristocrat among melons that so many have tried in vain to produce satisfactorily. He kindly explained to me his system of handling them; first starting the plants in berry boxes in the greenhouse, then setting them out in the field and putting cold frames over them until settled warm weather, then removing the frames and letting them run. Some of these melons are sold in Ottawa and some shipped to the U.S., and some to Toronto, selling for about four times the price of our local-grown melons. I am not an expert melon grower, but my own impression is that the extraordinary quality in flavor for which these melons are so famous is more a matter of soil and location than variety or method of culture, though the latter probably have something to do with it.

Before leaving Ottawa we held a meeting in the Market Hall, at which a branch association was formed, with Mr. Williams president; Mr. Fentteman vice-president, and T. Mockett, of Billings Bridge, secretary-treasurer.

From Ottawa I went to Montreal, Mr. Williams, the newly-elected president of the Ottawa branch, accompanying me. While in Ottawa I met Mr. Monk, M.P. for Jacques Cartier, who, with his usual kindness and courtesy, gave me a letter of introduction to Mr. Camille Légaré, Cote des Neiges, Montreal, one of the largest growers of greenhouse vegetables in Canada. His greenhouses were a revelation. I had heard of them at home, but "the half had not been told." Mr. Légaré was away when we arrived, but his son showed us around the place.

The first range of houses we entered comprised 13, each 20 by 125 feet, built en bloc. The outside walls were about seven feet high, centre gutters about the same from the ground, allowing free and open passage from house to house, 1¼ inch pipe purlins and supports, and one inch pipe cross-ties connected with the purlins by Ts, and drawn together in the centre by R and H couplings, preventing spreading and

avoiding the necessity of ridge supports. Hot water heating, overhead flow, principally 3½ and 4 inch is used, with underbench returns mostly two inch. Ventilators at the ridge are mostly King apparatus.

Two of these houses were filled with parsley; two were devoted to flowers, chiefly carnations; one or two were filled with watercress, radish, etc. The rest, or fully half the range, were in lettuce, some on raised and some on solid benches. Everything looked fine. The next range, comprising two houses, 50 by 200 feet, and 50 by 250 feet, respectively, was entirely devoted to lettuce, all grown on solid benches or, more correctly speaking, no benches at all. The crop was simply planted on the level ground. These immense houses are built end to end, allowing them to be detached at the sides, the walls being built high enough to allow of a row of sash ventilators being built in them. A row of large ventilators at the ridge completed the ventilating arrangements, those at the ridge being operated by an apparatus worked by an endless wire cable.

The lettuce grown in these houses is Grand Rapids, planted about seven inches apart. Some of it was being cut and packed while we were there. It was about 15 or 16 inches high, with large, heavy heads, quality excellent in every way, selling, I believe, for 60 to 80 cents per dozen wholesale in Montreal.

As we were finishing our inspection Mr. Légaré returned and gave us a very cordial welcome. The main object of our visit to Montreal was to induce the Montreal and Quebec growers to form an association for themselves on somewhat the same lines as ours in Ontario. We discussed the matter with Mr. Légaré at length, and he was confident that something can be done in the matter about September.

Getting back to general discussion again, Mr. Légaré informed us that he planned to erect about 25,000 feet more glass this summer, and as Mr. Williams is planning a new range of houses, too, we were very soon all knee deep in a discussion of different methods of construction.

The consensus of opinion seems to be that while raised benches may suit very well for winter months, yet, to produce a first-class article of head lettuce, even of the Grand Rapids variety, solid ones are much the best. At each of the points I visited the growers showed great interest in the work that is being done by the Ontario Vegetable Growers' Association, and were surprised to hear what the association already has accomplished.