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Our Fruit Trade With Great Britain

THERE are possibilities for an immense development of our fruit trade with Great Britain.

The conditions under which our fruit is handled by the steamship companies while in transit are, on the whole, very satisfactory.

The great bulk of Canadian fruit shipped to Great Britain is sold by auction in the large cities under circumstances that do not permit of our fruit growers being defrauded to any marked extent.

There is one great defect in the auction sale system of selling fruit. The fruit is sold as fast as it arrives. If several steamers with fruit discharge about the same time the market is glutted and much of the fruit is sacrificed, to the great loss of the Canadian growers. A few days later the market may be almost bare and prices for fruit high. Some arrangement should be made by which the quantity of fruit placed on the market each day can be regulated.

While there are a few firms in London that receive fruit by direct consignment for auction sale that are honest, there are many that are very dishonest. These latter firms defraud Canadian growers right and left. Their reputation for crooked work is so well known around Covent Garden that THE CANADIAN HORTICULTURIST has refused to publish advertisements from them, soliciting consignments of Canadian fruit, although they offered to pay for their advertisements in advance.

Canadian growers should have a representative in London at least, just before and during the fruit season, to act as their agent and look after the disposal of their fruit. This agent could arrange to keep the fruit in cold storage, so that it may be sold when the market was most favorable.

Owing to the fact that a few years ago large quantities of fraudulently packed Canadian fruit were sent to Great Britain (a considerable amount of bad packing is still being done), many large wholesale firms in Great Britain, that would like to buy fruit direct from our growers, are afraid to make the venture. They prefer to buy by auction where they can have a chance to examine the goods before purchase. Were these firms sure they could depend on the quality and

packing of the fruit they ordered, they would be willing to buy direct from Canadian growers, thus saving the middlemen's profits that now go into the hands of the commission dealers and auctioneers on the other side. It should be possible to greatly develop this trade so that, ultimately, the bulk of our fruit could be placed directly in the hands of the wholesale and retail buyers.

Canadian fruit, as far as quality is concerned, when compared with the fruit from other countries, stands high in Great Britain. Properly handled, London alone could consume all the fruit Canada is now exporting.

There is great need for improvement in the packing of our fruit and in certain conditions connected with its sale in Great Britain. The first and most necessary step towards improvement

BENEFITS THE INDUSTRY

I appreciate highly the merits of THE CANADIAN HORTICULTURIST in fostering the fruit industry all over Canada. I try to profit by the lessons given so liberally.—Auguste Dupuis, Director Quebec Fruit Experiment Stations, Village des Aulnaies, Que.

is the placing of a man in London to represent Canadian growers. This man should be appointed either by the Dominion Government or by the co-operative fruit growers' associations and the larger apple shippers now doing business in Canada.

OUR INVESTIGATIONS

These facts have become evident to THE HORTICULTURIST as a result of the trip to Great Britain made this summer by a staff representative of the paper, with the object of gaining all the information possible, concerning the transportation of our fruit and of the conditions governing its sale in the Old Country.

Our representative was in Great Britain slightly over one month. During this period he spent considerable time in London, Bristol, Liverpool, Manchester and Newcastle, in England; and in Glasgow, Leith, and Edinburgh, in

Scotland. The auction salesrooms were visited and sales of fruits from other countries watched. The large dealers, the auctioneers, the buyers, and even the grocers handling Canadian fruit were interviewed. Each and all were asked for criticisms and suggestions.

Enough information of interest to our Canadian growers was gathered to fill several issues of THE CANADIAN HORTICULTURIST. Owing to the importance of this information we have decided to impart it to our readers in a series of articles that will extend over several months. The subjects of the main articles will be: The Auction Sales System of Selling Fruit in Great Britain; Direct Consignments of Fruit to Private Firms; and Suggestions for the Improvement of our Fruit Trade with Great Britain.

WHY OUR MAN WENT

The reason THE CANADIAN HORTICULTURIST sent its representative to Great Britain to gain this information was because it realizes the vast importance of our fruit trade with the mother country, and the need for protecting the interests of Canadian shippers. There has long been a great demand for reliable and complete information concerning our export trade in fruits. While the splendid work that has been done by the Dominion Department of Agriculture, through the initiative of Prof. Jas. W. Robertson, in improving the shipping facilities for fruit in the adoption of uniform boxes and in passing the Fruit Marks Act is recognized, there is a strong feeling that an improvement is needed on the other side, in regard to the manner in which the fruit is disposed of after its arrival. Complaints of fraud have been made again and again in regard to the sale of fruit. It has been claimed that our fruit is not sufficiently advertised, and that there are far too many middlemen handling the goods for the benefit of our growers. To answer these and other statements of a similar nature there has been a sad lack of reliable, definite information. The commercial agents at intervals have made reports, but often it has happened that these reports have conflicted one with the other. Again it has been felt that these agents, with one or two exceptions, have not been