

## Evidence of Chief of the Fruit Division

**S**PEAKING on the Early Apple Trade, before the select committee on Agri. and Colonization of the House of Commons, Mr. Alexander McNeill, chief of the fruit division, pointed out that the percentage of the early apples to the whole Canadian trade with Britain in this commodity fell last year to less than 2%. This was a great drop from nearly 4½% in the years 1904-05. Asked as to the reason of this, the speaker said that it was because the growers and dealers thought that they could not compete with the British growers, particularly when there was a good crop on the other side. It was also due to a peculiarity of human nature that made men averse to adopting changes. Then too there was a lack of confidence in the British market.

Mr. McNeill was questioned as to what accommodation had been afforded for shipping fruit at low temperatures, and answered that iced cars had been provided and also arrangements made for cool compartments on the ocean-going steamers.

"What guarantee has the shipper of the temperature at which these compartments are kept?" asked Mr. Armstrong of Lambton.

"There are the reports of the commercial inspectors on the other side of the water as to the condition of the fruit upon arrival and the thermograph records," answered Mr. McNeill.

Mr. E. D. Smith, of Winona, asked if these

cars and compartments were kept at as low a temperature as they should be, to which Mr. McNeill replied that some apples were shipped to Montreal in ordinary cars and tests had shown the centre of some of the bbls. to go as high as 70 to 85 deg. These were placed in the cool compartments on the steamer alongside the bbls. that had come in the cool cars, to the great detriment of the latter.

"Do none of the shippers send their apples in boxes?" asked Mr. Smith.

"I am sorry to say that the fruit growers have not got into the way of shipping in boxes to any large extent," was the reply.

Further discussion on the cold storage question brought out the statement from the speaker that shippers should learn to cool their fruit before putting it on the cars. It should be delivered at the steamer at as low a temperature as possible. Mr. McNeill expressed himself positively in favor of boxes for the early apple trade. "Some tests made at Washington," he said, "showed that it takes nearly a week to cool the centre of a barrel of apples from 75 degrees to 33 degrees. To do the same with boxes requires only two days."

Mr. Smith suggested that steamers should be provided with machinery for cooling fruit, and was informed that that would be possible if the shippers were willing to pay double freight rates.

"But they pay 60% more than ordinary rates as it is," replied Mr. Smith.

Mr. McNeill pointed out that it would be cheaper to cool the fruit at home before starting it on its journey. He emphasized this as a very important point. This, a member pointed out, would involve the necessity of the farmer having cold storage right at hand. Mr. McNeill in reply pointed to the system that is in use at St. Catharines. He thought that there are several points in Southern Ont. where similar cooling stations might be established. He added that the question of cold storage buildings was a technical one, coming under the personal supervision of Mr. Ruddick, and said he believed that Mr. Ruddick will develop a cheap form of cold storage that can be used by groups of fruit growers.

Two important points were then touched on: 1st, that the condition of the fruit at the time it was picked determined in a great degree its keeping qualities, especially in the early varieties of apples, and 2nd, that the secret of success in shipping fruit was to cool it at the start and follow it up with cool transportation facilities all the way to the market.

Mr. McNeill called attention to the fact that early fruit needs more care in picking than the

later varieties. Unlike them it cannot be picked all at once. The fruit that is ready for shipping has to be selected first and the rest allowed to get into the right condition. Attention was called to the fact that in regard to a steady supply of early apples, Canada is very fortunately situated. Early in Aug. apples can be shipped from Essex Co. In the latter part of Aug. they are ready along the north shore of Lake Ontario. In the beginning of Sept. they can be shipped from the lower part of the St. Lawrence valley, and from the valley of the St. John River late in Sept. This gave a steady supply and if the trade were properly handled would bring the apples into favor with the importers.

Turning to another matter Dr. Sinclair asked if the Gravenstein family of apples were failing in Ontario. Mr. McNeill replied in the affirmative, stating that he thought that the difficulty might be overcome if the growers learned to top-graft the variety on a hardy stock.

### A GREAT WASTE

Mr. McNeill quoted figures to show that the total production of apples last year was in the neighborhood of 12,000,000 bbls., and that the exports from the whole of the Dominion during the same period were but 1,500,000 bbls. Supposing that 1,000,000 bbls. were evaporated and two or three million bbls. more used at home there would be still a large quantity to be accounted for.

"They are fed to domestic animals," said one of the committee.

"I should consider that wasted," said Mr. McNeill.

The most natural and profitable outlet for this fruit, he averred, was the manufacture of it into jams and jellies, and evaporated fruit. In this, Canada might take a lesson from the U.S. Canada's exports of evaporated apples last year, he stated, were 3,500,000 lbs., equal in value to \$212,000. Apples in bbls. exported amounted to 4,000,000 bbls. The U.S. exported a little over 4,000,000 bbls. of green fruit and 27,852,830 lbs. of evaporated apples.

"Where do they find a market for it?" was asked.

"In Europe; a large proportion of it going to Germany," replied Mr. McNeill.

"But the German market is closed to us, is it not?" questioned one M.P.

"Yes."

Mr. McNeill then told his audience that in the best commercial opinion a good market could be found for Canadian cider in Gt. Britain. The expert cider manufacturers of that country could find a valuable use for it for blending with the home variety. Before the fruit now going to waste can be utilized he claimed that there will have to be a greater diffusion of knowledge among the growers.\*

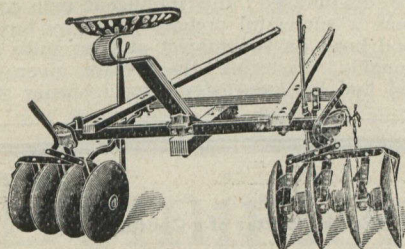
## New Brunswick Fruit Growers' Association

**T**HE annual meeting of the N.B. Fruit Growers' Assn. was held at Fredericton. There was an exhibition of apples grown by the members which was fairly representative of the principal varieties grown in the district. The task of judging these was entrusted to Prof. Sears, the horticulturist of the Agri. College at Truro, N.S., and Mr. A. McNeill, of the Fruit Dept. at Ottawa.

Pres. J. C. Gilman, of Kingsclear, N.B., said that, as a whole, the N.B. growers had fared as well last year as those of other provinces. Small fruit growers had found strawberries to be their most reliable crop, and with the good prices obtainable, much encouragement was afforded them to increase their output. Other small fruits had been variable, and the apple crop turned out somewhat uneven. Insects were numerous and active, giving much trouble. The conference of fruit growers at Ottawa had brought together representatives of the fruit growing interests in the various provinces.

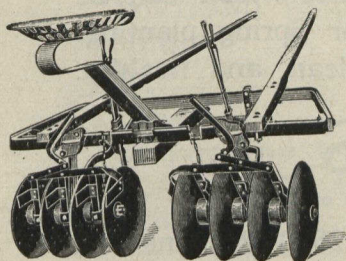
Amongst the most important work accomplished was the establishment of 4 grades of apples, the law to define the different grades. This would give one system of grading, one system of marking, and with a standard barrel and box make it possible for a buyer to know what to expect both in quality and quantity. Under these circumstances Canadian fruit should soon get the reputation its merits warrant in the markets of the world. It was for the growers of N.B. to ask themselves what they could do towards supplying the ever-increasing demand for good fruit. How were they situated with regard to production, cost of package, facilities for handling and transportation? There were within less than 100 miles of St. John thousands of acres of land well adapted to fruit growing, and the Government was giving valuable aid in various directions. The Federal Government proposes to aid cold storage. Local markets were not fully supplied, and even if they were,

### BISSELL'S



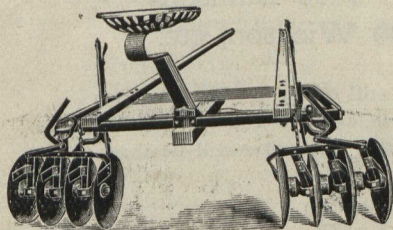
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