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WIDE AWAKE BRITISH COLUMBIA FRUIT GROWERS

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THE Province of British Columbia is progressing very rapidly in the matter of fruit growing. The climate (we might say climates, for British Columbia has several) has much to do with this advancement. The islands, coast and lower mainland are particularly adapted to small fruits, though excellent fruit trees are also grown in large sections of this country. The semi-arid inland valleys are particularly adapted, under irrigation, to the cultivation of apples, plums and cherries. With the development of the various schemes for irrigation it is not at all improbable that in the near future British Columbia will supply fruit enough to meet the demands of the prairie provinces.

Another most potent cause for the excellence of the methods employed in British Columbia is the fact that many of the fruit growers have gone into this province quite lately totally unacquainted with fruit growing, having, however, considerable capital. These men are not loaded down with a quarter of a century of prejudice, but come to their work fresh and willing to imbibe the latest and best from books and from their most successful competitors in the business. This will account for the fact that on the average the methods of British Columbia are infinitely ahead of those of the average fruit grower in eastern Canada.

In the Okanagan Valley irrigation is almost a necessity. This determines, to some

extent, the nature of the product, as well as the methods employed in producing it. Clean culture is almost uniform. Where water has to be conveyed for many miles in an artificial water bed, constructed at great cost, it does not take long to convince the fruit grower that he should not waste it upon grass and weeds.

EARLY FRUITING.

The control which the orchardist has over his trees contributes to the early fruiting of nearly every variety of tree, and probably the dry atmosphere has much to do with the perfect pollination of fruit blossoms. The setting of the fruit is usually what an eastern fruit grower would call phenomenally heavy, and has led to another orchard practice, almost unknown in eastern Canada, namely, thinning of the growing fruit, even on apple trees. It would strike the average Ontario or Nova Scotian grower as a waste of money to pay a man \$1.25 a day to pull good apples off a full grown apple tree, but this is the common practice in British Columbia, and one which is a necessity.

The one fruit tree that is not thinned is the cherry. I took a branch of May Duke cherries, a foot long, from the orchard of Mr. Pridham, of Kelowna, and found that there were 154 perfect cherries on it. Apparently there were dozens of branches that could have been selected from the same tree quite as heavily loaded.