

Ontario Department of Agriculture

FRUIT BRANCH

HORTICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION

Peach Growing in Ontario

F. M. CLEMENT AND A. G. HARRIS.

INTRODUCTION.

When prices are high or above normal for any particular product the tendency is to produce more. With crops that are produced from seed or plants each year, such as onions and cabbage, the tendency is toward extreme variations in price each year. With tree fruits the extremes of variation in price must, of necessity, be several years apart. Peaches are no exception. Comparatively high prices for the product led to heavy plantings for a number of years. These plantings are now at their best or coming into their best. It was predicted by the leading fruit men several years ago that the price would be low when the young orchards came into bearing. It was even felt by some that quantities of fruit would be unmarketed. These conditions, however, have not been so serious as expected. Production has increased as was assured from the largely increased acreage, and prices for the years 1913 and 1915 have been comparatively low (1914 was a complete failure), but no great quantity of fruit has gone to waste. Good fruit has been in demand.

With the improved distribution of the past season, the aid of advertising, the improvement of packages and packs, and the more extended use of refrigeration, it is reasonable to expect that the markets will recover. One other factor seems to be pointing in an upward direction. The planting of young trees was heaviest during the years of 1908, 1909 and 1910, gradually decreasing to the years 1913 and 1914. The 1915 plantings were comparatively light, and at the time of writing prospects for heavy plantings in 1916 are not bright. No figures are available for the last few years, but it is apparent to the observer that the tendency to plant heavily is not as strong as from five to seven years ago.

Peach-growing in most of the tender fruit sections of Ontario has long passed the experimental stage, but habits and customs are changing constantly. It is only fair to expect, however, that the number of plantings will centre around normal until high prices again coax the growers into sudden and extensive plantings.

HISTORICAL.

The first record, available to the writers, of peaches grown in Ontario is taken from the diary of Mrs. Simcoe, Niagara, July 2, 1793: "We treated them with cherries, we having large May Duke cherry trees behind the house and three stan-