

REPORT OF THE HORTICULTURIST.

(W. W. HILBORN.)

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Ottawa.

SIR,—I have the honour to submit herewith a report relating to the progress made under your direction in the Horticultural Department of the Central Experimental Farm.

The cultivation of fruit, still in its infancy, is becoming of great importance in the Dominion.

The great variation in soil and climate in different parts permits of the growth of a very large number of varieties to great perfection. While we cannot grow the more tender sorts of trees in the colder portions of Canada, many of the small fruits can be grown profitably, and it is hoped that the limits within which large fruits can be grown will shortly be extended much further north and west.

With that end in view a large number of Russian fruits have been secured for trial at the Central Experimental Farm. A collection is also being made of hardy western and native seedling fruits, to which will be added a great number of seedlings originated on the grounds, many of them from seeds which have ripened as far north as such can be obtained. These added will make a collection of which much may be expected.

Possession of the farm was obtained so late in the autumn of 1886 that there was no time to prepare land for orchard planting, and being unwilling to lose one season's growth a very large and valuable collection was ordered of apple, pear, plum, cherry and other fruit trees, which were received in the spring and planted in nursery rows in suitable soil. There they received careful cultivation, and, notwithstanding the severe drought which prevailed during the whole season, the trees made a satisfactory growth and formed such a mass of fibrous roots that the transplanting of them to the orchards can be done with little or no risk and with but slight check to their growth.

APPLES.

Canadian apples command the highest prices in foreign markets and are not surpassed in any part of the world for flavour, colour, keeping and shipping qualities, we need not, therefore, be afraid of successful competition.

The demand for the apples of this country for export is increasing much more rapidly than the supply, and will, it is believed, continue to do so as the knowledge of their superior qualities becomes better known; more attention should therefore be given to this fruit in those localities where it grows to such perfection.

The collection at the Experimental Farm already consists of 903 apple trees, 297 varieties, of which 174 are from Russia and other parts of Northern Europe. Of these trees 216 were planted out in orchard last autumn to test the relative merits of fall as compared with spring planting.

A fine piece of sandy loam was selected for the orchard, it was manured early in the season, well ploughed and the soil got into good condition for planting. This plantation will be extended early in the coming spring. Those which were put out last autumn were planted thirty feet apart each way, the trunks loosely wrapped in tarred paper and earth drawn up around the base of each tree to the height of from twelve to fifteen inches.

ORAB APPLES.

Of this fruit the collection contains 26 trees, of 12 varieties, chiefly of American origin, most of which should succeed in this locality.