

Fruit Growing in British Columbia and the Outlook

Thos. G. Earle, Lytton

IN THE beginning of my experience, of over forty years, with fruit growing in British Columbia, I was inexperienced and, in consequence, made the great mistake of having too many varieties. When an agent came along with a book of plates of fancy apples, such as the Alexander and Wolf River, I ordered some of them. Now, I have to top-graft them, as well as other varieties, as I find that they are not suited to the demand.

At this date, fruit-growing is down to a science. The person who is going to succeed in fruit-growing, requires only a very few choice varieties. The fancy red varieties find the readiest sale. Some choice varieties that do well in the east, such as the Baldwin, will not do here. The Baldwin is affected with what is termed the "Baldwin speck," or dry rot in specks. What will do well in one locality may not do well a few miles distant. The best way for the beginner is to carefully ascertain what variety will succeed in his locality.

WHAT TO PLANT

For commercial apples, one needs not over six varieties, and most of them red. For early summer, the Williams' Favorite is early, and a nice sweet red apple. Then the Duchess comes in for cooking. These will do for family use, or what is earlier, the Yellow Transparent. Then comes the Wealthy, a fine reddish showy apple that will keep until early winter. After this, the King, a large, fine apple, comes in. A splendid apple is the Spitzenburg. The Jonathan is one of the nicest dessert apples, and will keep fairly well. Wagener and Grime's Golden are very nice. Now, out of these and the Rome Beauty make a selection of not more than six varieties for commercial purposes. The Northern Spy is a very noted apple that does better in the east than here. As it is very long coming into bearing, I don't think they are as profitable as some others.

PICKING AND PACKING

When picking fruit, one should be very careful in seeing that the pickers do not pull the apples, pears, plums or cherries, off without the stems, as they will not keep as long. Care must be taken not to bruise the fruit. Nice fruit does not look well in rough boxes and will not sell as well. Use the nicest boxes or packages that there is to be had and it will pay. No bruised or scabby fruit should be packed as it will not keep. All peaches and pears should be wrapped and packed closely together, and the boxes or crates well filled, so that the fruit will not move in transportation.

Apples should remain on the trees until ripe. Pears are best picked on the green side and will ripen in the boxes. All apples and pears should be selected of uniform size for each box and without bruise or blemish. No apple or pear that falls to the ground should be sold as first-class fruit; but, if sold, they should be marked and sold for fruit that will not keep.

Apples should be packed in tiers and of uniform size. Some will have from three to six tiers, but a four-tier apple is the most in demand. Apples should fill the

would suppose that the C. P. R. would try and place our fruit in the Northwest promptly and properly, as we have there to compete with the growers of the United States. The duty on fruit is very light. They can grow and put it up here cheaper than we can. We have in this province as good soil and climate for fruit as there is in the world, also for vegetables and produce of all kinds. To make a success of fruit growing, we must have a fair chance of placing it on the markets of the northwest.

I wonder how we will come out when



One of the Many Beautiful Scenes in the Okanagan Valley

box closely and, before the lid is put on, they ought to be about one inch above the top of the box. When the lid is pressed and nailed down, they may bulge out in the middle. Pack closely, so that they will not rattle or bruise in moving the boxes. The variety and tiers with the grower's name and residence, must be plainly marked on the ends of each box or barrel to comply with the Fruit Marks Act. This is a fine thing, as, if any cheating is done, it can be easily shown who did it.

As fruit-growing has come down to a science, we must take pattern from the Californians, as they are very expert in boxing. We must be up-to-date if we are going to compete with them, as we surely have to do.

POOR TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES

We are badly handicapped in having only one main line of railroad. They charge a high rate and often side-track a car with perishable fruit for days. I sent last fall some apples by freight to Milestone, about 600 miles; they were twenty days in getting there, and were spoilt; but, of course, there was no redress. I fail to see what good the Railway Commission has done us as yet. One

the millions of trees that are being planted come into bearing, or how those that are paying exorbitant prices for all kinds of lands are coming out, especially those that are buying five or ten acres of land and have a family to support. I would suppose a family would want at least five acres more for a house, barn and a chicken house, also a cow or two, and a team. The owner has to pay also for water to irrigate his land and, in many localities, he is not certain of even that. I am not referring to those who have located at Peachland, or Summerland, and some other points, as they have money, and do not have to depend entirely upon the fruit or produce that they raise. There is a glorious future for this province, but it will take time to fully develop it. In order to make the fruit-growers prosperous, we must give them a fair show, and not deceive them with the idea that they can make money and prosper on five or ten acres of land, as so many of the speculators are doing. I have had many years of experience and I hope this article may do some good. I am well aware that it will not suit all, even if it is plain truth.