

---

 THE PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL ADDRESS.
 

---

The President, Alex. McD. Allan, Esq., of Goderich, delivered the following address at the annual meeting :

*To the Members of the Fruit Growers' Association of Ontario :*

The past season has been eventful to the fruit grower, and while we may offer congratulations upon the generally large crop, we are reminded that other elements are necessary to ensure profit. Probably we have never had a season in this province that shippers of apples lost so much money in as the past, and while doubtless the large crops of other countries contributed to the bringing down of prices in those markets where ours were disposed of, it is clear from the general returns of sales that the low prices are, to some extent, to be accounted for in other ways. Buyers too often aim at handling large lots rapidly, and hence we find often two or three brands of fruit in each barrel. If half or one-quarter the quantity had been handled by such buyers there would have been proper selection, evenness of brands, better packing and a remunerative sale. Competition is healthy and good in any business, but those who compete as purchasers of our fruit crop for export should first of all be sure that they understand their business. They must know when, where and how to buy, and especially what to buy. If the buyer does not know what the market he intends shipping to demands, how can he reasonably expect to supply customers there profitably? Those who made money the past season only handled the best selection of a few varieties; they also exercised care in having the fruit picked in proper season, and the packing was done by well recognised rule. To me it seems clearer than ever that buyers in order to succeed and at the same time do entire justice to growers must adopt a different system. They must buy only such varieties as they find will carry properly and suit the markets they deal with, and they must pay for the fruit, not so much per barrel for all fall varieties, and so much more for all winter varieties, but the value of *each variety* should be paid to the grower, and then only in accordance with the quality of the fruit, which can be judged by the labor and care expended by the grower in producing the crop.

The grower who has not cultivated, manured, trimmed his trees, kept their wood clean and healthy, and where necessary, thinned out the fruit, should not expect the same return from his orchard as the grower who has attended to these matters. Growers are still cultivating too many varieties. Exhibitions are responsible, to some extent, for this in offering prizes for large collections. I would not advocate a prize for a larger collection of kinds than ten, whereas most of the leading agricultural associations offer prizes for collections of twenty, and some even forty. The grower who honestly puts up such a collection, I venture to say, does not make profit out of his orchard excepting from a few kinds in the list. There is also an inducement to dishonest men to gather specimens over neighboring orchards in order to fill a large collection. The prizes should be so arranged as to bring out the best fruits for family use, local markets and shipping. When we come down to this we find but few varieties profitable, and hence probably a majority of the trees in many orchards are but cumberers of the ground. Looking at the yearly growth of competition in the fruit markets it is clear to me that the time has come when we must grow such varieties of the various fruits as we find succeed the best in the various sections, or in other words we must make specialties of growing only such kinds as we can bring to the highest state of perfection. If we consult the sale lists it is clear that certain sections can grow certain kinds much better than other sections, owing no doubt to a difference in climate and soil largely. The Annapolis Valley, Nova Scotia, has a specialty in Gravenstein, Ribston and Blenheim Pippins and King. The Island of Montreal and some sections of Eastern Ontario and Quebec can produce much finer specimens in Fameuse, Irish Peach and St. Lawrence than we can in the west. I doubt if any part of Western Ontario can produce as fine Blenheim Pippin as we find in the county of Wellington. And so on in every section we find specialties. The finest flavored grapes, outdoor varieties, are, in my opinion, grown in the Ottawa district, and the Collingwood district plums are richer than those grown in any district farther south.