

Co-Operation in the Export of Produce

It will astonish many people to learn that in 1899 the value of the principal food products imported by Great Britain amounted to 620 million dollars and that of this Canada contributed only seven per cent.

The problem that has to be solved by the farmers of this country is how to capture this market, in other words, how to produce, how to pack, how to ship, and how to sell. Professor Robertson estimates that this country can readily supply Great Britain with one-third of the principal food stuffs she consumes, and we do not believe that he has overshot the mark, for, if we have much to accomplish and much to learn, we have only just begun to set ourselves in earnest to the task.

We have improved in fruit culture and scientific cultivation of the soil, we have made satisfactory progress in the manufacture of our cheese and butter, and we are working hard to perfect our system of cold storage. But stupid, dishonest packing is still rampant amongst us, and hitherto we have not seen any really intelligent attempt to market Canadian farm products in Great Britain.

It is not surprising that the farmer has preferred to sell his produce for what he can get to a middleman, rather than himself ship to the British market, for he has been completely at the mercy of the receiver in the Old Country. How could the shipper know who was to be trusted and who was not? If the English broker claimed that the goods were damaged, or not in accordance with contract, how could the shipper in Canada fight against him? And there were no means of checking the charges that were made in accounts of sale. The English broker has been in the habit of adding to his commission extra charges which on this side of the water are unknown, such as cooperage, cataloguing, selecting, grading and etceteras, so that the shipper never really knew what amount would be deducted from the proceeds of his shipments.

It is gratifying to learn that at last these difficulties have been grappled with in a business manner, without attempting to depart, as others have done, from the established channels of trade. We have before us the literature of the European Exporters' Association of Toronto, Limited, an incorporated company with an authorized capital of \$100,000, organized for the protection of Canadian shippers. The Premier of Ontario is the president and Mr. James Scott vice-president, and the list of shareholders includes men like Sir Charles Tupper, Sir Wm. Howland, Hon. Geo. E. Foster, Messrs. Reuben Millichamp, S. F. McKinnon, and R. Bickerdike, late president of the Montreal Board of Trade, besides a number of well-known men in England, of whom, perhaps, Mr. Henniker Heaton, of penny postage fame, is best known in Canada. The association has offices in Toronto, Montreal and London, England, and an extensive system of agents at Canadian and British ports.

The association undertakes, on behalf of Canadian exporters, to arrange freight contracts, to attend to the stowage and prompt transportation of shipments and to investigate any claims that may be made by receivers, and report. Only one receiver is selected at each port for each kind of produce. The best man is chosen, and the best possible terms are made with him.

Canadian exporters can thus, by co-operation through the association, be guaranteed protection and honest treatment from the consignee in Europe, and the larger the volume of business that flows through this channel, the stronger and more effective will be the guarantee. Each receiver nominated by the association has always present before him the knowledge that, if dealings with him are not satisfactory, the trade will be given to another firm, and there are plenty who are anxious to get it.

The principle of co-operation has been successfully adopted by Canadian farmers in the management of cheese factories and creameries. We should like to see the same principle applied to the packing and shipping of apples.

We can see no reason why the different horticultural societies should not undertake this work just as is done by the fruit associations in Florida and California, where each association employs its own expert packers and has its own brand. For all such associations, as well as individual shippers of all kinds of produce, the European Exporters' Association will prove an invaluable agency. It supplies the link that was wanted in the perfection of our export system, and promises to play a very important part in the development of Canadian export trade.

The Insect Invasion of British Columbia

By Our Own Correspondent

No doubt your readers will be interested to hear some account of the plague of caterpillars from which British Columbia has been suffering this year,—and not British Columbia alone, but the whole Pacific coast as far down, I believe, as California. The pest rejoices in a long name,—*peridromia sancta* it is called and it is, properly speaking, a cut worm, the caterpillar of a small brown moth. How the plague arose no one can tell. I suppose the climatic conditions were favorable for one thing, and there seemed to be a remarkable decrease in the numbers of their natural enemies, the small birds. Why these latter should be so scarce is another enigma. What we do know is that about May the caterpillars began to be a nuisance. Through the next two months their numbers swelled, until by the end of July we realized that we were suffering from a visitation of the very worst kind. In a single night they would appear,—goodness knows where from,—at one end of a flourishing field of peas or roots and in a few hours that patch would be a desolated wilderness of tough hard stalks, rapidly browning in the sun. They devoured everything, the peas in the pod, the carrots and potatoes in the earth, weeds and all. Everywhere the ground was alive with their countless crawling millions. The noise of their feeding has been compared to the pattering of rain upon a roof, and they exuded a sickly, putrid smell.

Then came the cry for remedies. Some used Paris green in the form of a spray, others mixed it with bran and placed it in heaps about the fields. The worms laughed at the spray, they just rejected the green stuff on the tops and eat all the harder at the roots in the ground. As for the heaps of bran, they just killed friend and foe alike, in fact there was no limit to what they would kill, except caterpillars. Another remedy was found in saturating the ground with kerosene and whale oil soap, and this seems to have done some good in small patches.

In most cases, however, no remedies have been attempted. A scheme for dealing on a large scale with countless myriads of moving, feeding insects has yet to be devised. But where man has failed Providence steps in in a very wonderful way. It is very unlikely that this plague will be repeated next year. There is a little fly of the ichneumon species which lays its eggs on the living bodies of these caterpillars, the eggs hatch out, and the result is the destruction of the caterpillar, like Herod he is "eaten of worms."

Altogether the plague has endured from May to the middle of August. About the latter date the caterpillars became gradually less and less active, and gradually entered the chrysalis stage. Almost everywhere where their depredations have been committed, the pupae are now to be found about half an inch below the soil. The crows seem to know this and are diligently grubbing for them, while some farmers help on the good work with a coarse-toothed harrow.

Speaking of crows reminds me that chickens, ducks and turkeys were found quite ineffectual to quell the pest. They soon tired of the too full diet of caterpillar,—chickens are said to have lost condition and it is certain that ducks became affected with a kind of diarrhoea in consequence. It