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ONTARIO AND THE APPLE—A MOST PROFITABLE BUSINESS

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The Second Article by Prof. Crow. Apples as Profitable as Peaches. How the Smaller Growers of Apples may Solve the Great Problems that Confront Them.

THE tone of the preceding article in Farm and Dairy, October 20, might lead an unthinking person to conclude that apple growing in the Province of Ontario is an unsafe and an undesirable commercial proposition. As a matter of fact, no conclusion could be farther from the truth. The apple industry offers to-day a better opportunity for money making than ever before. While it is true that conditions previously referred to have resulted in a general depression of the industry, it is also true that there has been gradually brought about a condition of affairs unprecedented in our history. The vast increase in our consuming population and the remarkable extension of our shipping facilities, both boat and rail, have placed an almost unlimited market within our easy reach, and at the present time demand is vastly greater than supply.

It is quite true that in recent years there have been seasons of low prices, and it is also doubtless true that within the next few years similar periods will recur. It is a significant fact, however, and one which cannot be too forcibly brought to the attention of present and prospective fruit growers, that at no time within the last 10 years have strictly first-class apples been over plentiful; nor is it at all possible,—in fact, one might say it is almost impossible,—that such a condition will arise for many years to come.

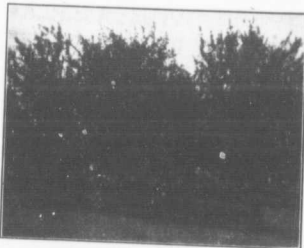
DECREASE IN QUANTITY

As has already been stated, the proportion of strictly first-class apples and, likewise, the actual quantity of apples of first grade have decreased within the last 15 years. The decrease has been so marked one would seem to be entirely safe in predicting that a number of years must elapse before the production of high-grade fruit begins to equal the demand for it. Low prices, when they come, as they are certain to do, will be caused, not by a surplus of high-grade fruit, but by the placing on the market of large quantities of second-grade and inferior stock. Low-grade fruit when marketed in considerable quantity does affect more or less seriously the selling price of best grades. As a general rule, however, there is practically no difficulty experienced in disposing of fruit of high grade. Growers who will give the necessary attention and care to their orchards are sure of a market, provided they grow sufficient quantity to attract buyers, or to enable them to place their own product on the market independently.

APPLES AS PROFITABLE AS PEACHES

I deem it distinctly a misfortune that so many of our best growers decline to permit the publication of the returns they are receiving and the profits they are making in apple growing. I have been fortunate enough, however, to have been admitted into the confidence of a number of growers, and I have no hesitation in saying that apple growing in the Province of Ontario when conducted by intelligent, thorough, business men pays to-day equally as well as peach growing.

We have been accustomed for many years to regard peach growing as the most profitable branch of the fruit industry. There may have been reason for this opinion in the past, but now the above statement will stand the closest scrutiny. I am quite convinced that an orchard of apples is fully as good financially as a peach orchard, and I can name more than one apple



Trees too Thick to Produce High Class Fruit

grower who would not exchange his apples, acre for acre, for the best peach orchard in the famous Niagara fruit belt.

EXTENSIVE PLANTING JUSTIFIED

The situation in Ontario to-day is one which will amply justify the planting of extensive orchards by men who have sufficient capital behind them. I am continually in receipt of letters from merchants and professional men concerning the opportunities for investment in apple growing. No man with a keen eye for profits can fail to be attracted by a study of the opportunities offered in apple production to-day.

In general, the most difficult phase of the sub-



Trees too Thick and Badly Mottled

These two illustrations show characteristic orchards near Collingwood, Ont. in the Georgian Bay apple growing district. Think you that the owners of these orchards will not give heed to them after seeing the results obtained from the demonstration orchards in the district? One demonstration orchard there had never before returned its owner \$50. This year, the first season under improved orchard management, it returned \$200 after all expenses had been met.

ject presenting itself at present is the problem of marketing. A man of means going into the business on a fairly extensive scale would have little difficulty on this score. All that is necessary is to grow and pack first-class fruit in quantities not less than carloads.

PROBLEM FOR SMALL GROWERS

The problem for the small grower, on the other hand, is much more complicated. For him the only solution seems to be cooperative selling. At present a small producer, if he is isolated, cannot attract a buyer to his district. If he is situated in a large producing section he will not, of course find it so difficult to dispose of his crop, but even in such sections cooperative marketing has very considerable advantages for the small grower.

I am quite aware that many persons will be inclined to bring up the fact that co-operative selling has not in the past been so uniformly successful as could be desired. It is true that some of our associations have become noted for the quality of their packs and the businesslike administration of their organizations. On the other hand, it is also unfortunately true that a large number of our associations have failed entirely, and several others seem at present to be going backward instead of forward. None of these facts can, however, be taken as reflecting on the correctness of the principle involved.

COOPERATIVE MARKETING

True cooperation is the remedy for the present depressed condition of affairs. It is rather a remarkable fact that up to the present time we in Ontario have made very little use of the results secured by other countries in cooperative marketing. Associations have come into existence here and there, and after a short period of greater or less activity have disappeared and quit the business. Various reasons can be assigned for the many failures. The ordinary joint-stock plan of organization, in which the stock is all held by a few individuals, is not cooperative in principle and has been the direct cause of more than one failure among our associations. Limited liability has been another stumbling block. Older countries adopted unlimited liability many years ago, finding it truly cooperative in principle and perfectly satisfactory in operation.

LARGE MEMBERSHIP UNSAFE AT START

Another fruitful cause of disappointment in cooperative work has been the practice of taking in a large number of members at the start. Experience shows that it is much safer to begin with a small number of first-class men. If five or six careful, thorough fruit growers will make up their minds to stick together in spite of any opposition that may be offered by buyers or others, and if they will at the beginning establish definite, positive rules concerning spraying, cultivating, grading and packing, they will have no difficulty in disposing of their crop, or in securing additively to their number as the results of their work become known throughout their district.

A few good growers banding together in this way will get higher prices than if they were handling the crop from a large number of more or less neglected orchards. The object lesson by which their neighbors will profit and which serves