

FARM AND DAIRY



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& RURAL HOME

The Recognized Exponent of Dairying in Canada



Trade increases the wealth and glory of a country; but its real strength and stamina are to be looked for among the cultivators of the land.—Lord Chatham.

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Marketing, the Fruit Growers' Big Problem

A Report of the Addresses and Discussions at the 55th Annual Convention of the Ontario Fruit Growers' Association.

"ARE we discouraged?" asked the Ontario fruit growers who assembled for the 55th Annual convention of their association in Toronto. Truly, they had good cause to be. Hard frosts early in the season practically ruined the peach crop. A widespread money stringency interfered with the sale of earlier crops. And then came war to demoralize the apple crop. But the answer of Ontario fruit growers to their own query is, "Business as usual."

This year has merely served to accentuate a situation that has been developing for many years,—the difficulty of marketing the fruit crop with economy and efficiency. Growers realize that this, rather than the growing of crops is now their most difficult problem, and they have set themselves resolutely to solve it. The greater part of the discussions at last week's convention were of a business nature. Perhaps the most novel suggestion looking to the widening of the apple market was contained in the president's address. "England has the roast beef, Scotland the oatmeal, and Ireland the potato," said President Robert Thompson, of St. Catharines. "We in Canada might well take the apple for our national dish, as in no other country does the apple flourish as it does in Canada." This suggestion was later embodied in the form of a resolution.

Many People Don't Eat Apples.

The possibilities of market extension right in our own cities was made plain by Fruit Commissioner Johnson, when he stated that fully one-half of our urban population do not eat apples at all and that not one-quarter of the amount that should be consumed is marketed. The object of the government's advertising campaign this fall was to reach this market, and Mr. Johnson believed it had succeeded to a gratifying extent, 30,000 enquiries having been received at Ottawa as a result of the campaign.

"More would be consumed were it not for the price," said Mr. Johnson. As a method of getting cheap apples to the people who cannot pay much he recommended bulk shipments in cars, a method adopted extensively for the first time this season. He contrasted the desirability of two methods of handling these bulk shipments by using as illustrations two cars shipped to Ottawa. The first car was purchased at 25 cents a barrel on the trees and carried to Ottawa, 150 miles, and sold at \$1 a barrel to hucksters. The dealers' profit was 40 cents. The hucksters sold at \$2 to \$3 a barrel to consumers.

A car load of apples was purchased by the Ottawa City Council in Western Ontario at 40 cents a barrel delivered at the car. The car bottom was covered with six inches of straw, the sides

were padded and the apples piled in about three feet deep. At Ottawa they were bagged at a total cost of seven cents and delivered in the consumer's cellar at 65 cents a bag. A single notice in the city papers was sufficient to sell the whole car. "The producer got the price he asked and the consumer got his apples at less than one-half cost," said Mr. Johnson. Had apples been available to all at this price, twice as many would have been used. The Commissioner further stated that this method might be adopted as a

A National Dish for Canada

"As the apple reaches the highest state of perfection in Canada; is both beautiful to look upon and very pleasing to the taste; is popular with both rich and poor; is one of the most health-giving and stimulating articles of diet; it is therefore the opinion and wish of this Association that the apple henceforth will be regarded as the national dish of Canada."

So reads a resolution adopted unanimously and heartily by the Ontario Fruit Growers' Association and the Ontario Horticultural Association in their annual conventions at Toronto last week. Why not?

means of disposing of cheaper grades of apples in the best of seasons.

"If we don't find some way to increase consumption, we will soon have over-production," was his warning. There are 25,000,000 fruit trees in Canada, and in some of the greatest apple districts not over 50 per cent. of the trees are yet in bearing."

Retail Decline Not Practicable

Marketing was also the theme of a talk by Prof. J. W. Crow, O.A.C., Guelph. Retail marketing by the producer did not appeal to him as being either desirable or practicable. "When the grower follows his apples to the wholesale market he has done his part," said Prof. Crow. "From then on it is the consumer's problem." He attributed high retail prices to a multiplicity of fruit stands, each with a very small turn-over. This problem he believed would not be solved until municipal governments recognized that food distribution was a subject for government restriction. To the grower he advocated more extensive advertising of his product and the placing of a product of higher uniform quality on the market. To this end he strongly advocated thinning, which would result in a high proportion of No. 1 fruit. Prof. Crow estimated the increased returns on 100 barrels of fruit at \$23.40 as a result of thinning of the trees.

Marketing from the cooperative standpoint was dealt with by F. C. Hart. The essentials to cooperative business success as laid down by Mr. Hart will be dealt with more fully in later issues of Farm and Dairy. Mr. G. E. McIntosh of Forest, the association's transportation expert, embodied his ideas on cooperation in a concrete suggestion. He believed that Ontario fruit growers should be organized into district associations, a district including all the local organizations in one or more counties with these district organizations in turn members of a great central body. Through this central body the main business would be transacted. Mr. McIntosh called attention to the success that this plan had met with as applied to Nova Scotia and British Columbia, but more particularly in the case of the California Fruit Growers' Exchange.

Direct to Consumer Trading

Still another phase of the marketing problem was outlined by W. H. Bunting of St. Catharines, who told of his success in building up a direct to the consumer trade through the medium of newspaper advertising. This trade, Mr. Bunting had found a remunerative sideline, but he emphasized the fact that much of his fruit is still sold to the commission man and the retail dealer, and in his belief will continue to be for a long time to come. To fully round out the discussion a retail grover of Toronto, Mr. L. W. Clark, was given an opportunity of presenting the retailer's case. Mr. Clark proved to the satisfaction of most that retailers are not making exorbitant profits. He enlarged on such abuses of the trade as partially filled berry boxes and the shipping of immature fruit.

Transportation Difficulties

A constant source of irritation and often of considerable loss in marketing fruit is the unsatisfactory service given by the express companies. Grower after grower got up in the convention and told of the losses they had sustained through rough handling, pilfering and delayed deliveries. They embodied their suggestions for reform in a series of resolutions asking for an extension of the powers of the railway commission to cover the operation of all transportation agencies doing business in Canada, and asking for the passage of Bill 85 now under consideration at Ottawa, which will safeguard the growers to a considerable extent.

Other resolutions bore directly on the marketing problem. One expressed appreciation of the enterprise of Sir George E. Foster in conducting an apple advertising campaign, and asking that the campaign be continued next year. Another asked for the legalization of a box the same length and width as the standard apple box, but only five inches in depth for use in the export business. Still another requested that the staff of fruit inspectors be strengthened so that the fruit growers may have their fruit inspected at point of shipment during the packing season and that the inspector issue a certificate stating the re-

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