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The British Market for Canadian Fruit

Suggestions from a British Trader's Standpoint

"GOODS well bought are half sold," is a well-known maxim. We might say also that apples well picked are half packed. There cannot possibly be too much care given to the handling of the fruit in every stage, from the time it leaves the tree until the time it is well packed in the barrel. We have heard of fruit in some orchards lying about under the trees for days, and even weeks, before being collected and packed; such treatment renders it often unfit to stand shipping, and if it is exported, it mainly arrives bruised and dirty. There is a great deal in getting it to the store or packing house as soon as possible after it leaves the tree.

In grading, I would suggest that rather than make, say, a poor barrel of No. 2's, the grade should be kept well up, and a good barrel packed that will fetch good money, letting all "throw outs" go to the No. 3 barrel. There is everything in carefully sorting the fruit. If I were a grower, I should be inclined to make four grades of my fruit. All the "extra" and "fancy" I should most carefully select and pack in boxes (this box trade pays better than any); then go on in the selection of my No. 1's, 2's, and 3's. This might take a little more time, but it would well repay exporters who wish to make the best prices for their fruit, and who send it over on consignment terms, to fetch its full market value. Fruit well selected and reliable in packing will always fetch its price on this market.

As to "storing," it is obvious that we cannot offer suggestions from this side. The great aim, of course, from a market point of view is to store apples only for such a length of time as shall not detract too much from their appearance and soundness, and to use every means to prevent them from shrivelling; especially is this important in the case of Russets for the late trade.

GOOD PACKING IS IMPORTANT

Now for the key to successful export trade, namely, *good packing*. To ensure a good "tight" barrel without bruising the fruit, is the work of an expert. No

grower should attempt to ship until he has satisfied himself as to his packers, as this is very often the dividing line between profit and loss and the rock upon which so many have foundered.

Experience leads me to say that, generally speaking, the Nova Scotian packers excel those of Ontario. It is with a desire to be one of the friends of the Ontario grower, that I thus tell him of what is, in some cases, one of his faults,

Instructive and Practical

THE CANADIAN HORTICULTURIST is well edited and extremely instructive. Through its articles, orchardists of long experience as well as beginners learn more about the fruit industry and the best means of managing trees and securing crops than they do from the best books on fruit culture. The advice given in this magazine on the selection of varieties, according to latitude and elevation, is worth thousands of dollars to the planter who, too often, is deceived by tree pedlars.—Auguste Dupuis, Director Quebec Fruit Experiment Stations.

and as only our best friends can perform so delicate an operation, I herewith make the assertion.

BOX TRADE WORTH GETTING AFTER

If the Canadian growers generally would study this special packing, and put all their "fancy" fruit into forty-pound boxes, they would find a fancy price awaiting them here, *with this proviso*, that *extra and fancy fruit only* should be packed in this way. The writer could find a splendid market for any growers who are disposed to go into this trade thoroughly, and invites correspondence on the matter, through the editor of THE CANADIAN HORTICULTURIST.

TRANSPORTATION

Now a few words as to shipping. We heard very few complaints last season,

on the whole, of shipments arriving in bad condition. This is largely due to the care now exercised by the shipping companies. I must here say a word for the Thomson Line; their general business characteristics of promptness, politeness and push (on this side at any rate) make it a pleasure to do business with them, and their discharging and storage facilities at the Surrey Commercial Dock place them in the forefront as carriers of fruit and perishable products. I hold no brief for any shipping company but merely speak as I find, and of my experience of their capabilities in successfully handling this traffic.

Ever increasing care must, however, be given to protection from *frost*, at all points, especially during the latter part of the season, both during the time of storing and of shipping, and by both rail and shipping companies. I saw one of the finest parcels of Russets that came to this market last season, spoilt completely by frost; it was, of course, a very exceptional winter, but what a pity, after so successfully storing such valuable fruit all those months, to have them spoilt for want of a little more care on the part of someone!

Why do not the various associations in Ontario combine together in groups, and ship their produce to their own appointed representative over here, to dispose of on their account, as, and when, the markets are good, holding them in storage when the markets are fully stocked and the prices for the time being low?

The Surrey Commercial Dock Company would by arrangement allocate one of their spacious warehouses specially suited for storage purposes, and also keep it at a proper temperature for the storing of the fruit in its best possible condition.

Of course this storage facility could only be obtained by the combined action of the associations, which alone could guarantee a sufficient number of barrels as would pay the dock company in giving such facilities. But given this guarantee, they are quite prepared to study the interests of the trade in every way, and I have the assurance on this point