

The New Experiment Station

The paramount topic of conversation among fruit growers in the Niagara peninsula, is the new experiment station. I have heard a medley of opinions on the fitness of the location and soil for experimental purposes. Some men heartily approve the choice; others condemn it. A summing up of the general feeling would show that, while the farm is not ideally suited for the purpose, the majority of growers are satisfied with the selection.

"Provided that a railway station be located on the Clinton-Louth township line," said E. D. Smith, M.P., Winona, "I think the provincial government acted wisely in accepting the Rittenhouse offer. I am told that the farm is a good fair average for fruit growing. Both climate and soil are very good, although not ideal. The choicest location, however, is not the best for experimental purposes. I hope that the government will go into the problems of hybridization and the introduction of new varieties in a whole-hearted manner. With this end in view a very high-class man as director should be employed."

Mr. Geo. F. Lewis, Winona, said that Mr. Rittenhouse's offer, being so generous, could not be overlooked since the farm itself is all that could be required. It contains a variety of soils, which is desirable for experimental work in fruit growing.

"The government has made a good selection in accepting the Rittenhouse farm," said Mr. J. W. Smith, Winona. "I consider the section in the vicinity of that farm one of the best in Canada for fruit growing, particularly peaches and strawberries. If the farm consists of a variety of soils, such as it is said to do, then it is about all that could be desired. I doubt if a suitable farm for the purpose could be secured in Grimsby or Winona, because for experimental purposes a farm not planted is required."

"Although rather out of the way, the farm is centralized and should be acceptable to the entire Niagara district," is the opinion of Mr. Geo. Chambers, Winona. "If an electric railway goes through that neighbourhood within the next three or four years, the locality is all right."

Directly opposed to the foregoing interviews are the opinions of Mr. A. B. Foran, Winona, and others here and there throughout the peninsula. Mr. Foran said: "The new experimental farm is very poorly located. It is difficult of access and the soil, as far as I can learn, is decidedly objectionable. If the farm was selected with the idea of forming a compromise between the eastern and western ends of the district, it has failed in its purpose; because neither end is satisfied."

"I think it was a mistake to locate the farm without consulting a representative body of fruit growers," said Mr. W. M. Orr, Fruitland. "The location for such a farm is best selected by men who know the A.B.C. of fruit growing. The cost of the land is a mere bagatelle, and the fact that a farm is offered to the government free of cost, though generous and commendable in itself, should be the last consideration. For experimental purposes, the Rittenhouse farm cannot be compared to others in the same section located directly under the mountain and exempt from frost. Another point that apparently was not taken into consideration when making the selection is the fact that the Rittenhouse farm, located as it is on the lake, is at least a week later than farms located nearer the mountain. This fact alone may mean the shutting out of some valuable fruit."

Two prominent fruit growers from the Winona-Grimsby district personally visited the farm and found to their own satisfaction that there is very little soil there suitable for peach growing,

and that is an important consideration in the selection of a farm for experimental work in this district. Less than 20% of the surface soil is sandy in character and this is resting upon a high, hard pan.—A.B.C.

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