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## ONTARIO AND THE APPLE—THE INDUSTRY DECLINING

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### The Condition of the Industry as it Exists Today and the Causes Responsible for the Decline— Facts Discussed by One Who Knows.

"SAM, go out in the orchard and rake hay till noon, will you?"

Sam was a new man and had been on the farm only a week. He wasn't slow, as a rule, but now he hesitated and looked at "the boss" quizzically.

"Orchard?" he said. "I didn't know there was one on the place."

"Oh," explained the farmer, "I mean that five-acre field out back of the barn. There used to be an orchard there but it didn't pay, and we cut it down. We always speak of that field as 'the orchard' yet."

We need not concern ourselves with the specific names applied by the farmer to each of his various fields but inasmuch as the fate of the hay-growing orchard is typical of the fate of many orchards in the fair province of Ontario, it behoves us to enquire briefly into the wherefores of the case.

#### THE FATE OF ORCHARDS

First of all, may I ask if the reader is aware that acres and acres of orchard trees have been actually offered up in smoke right here in Ontario because they "didn't pay?" May I state, too, that there are in this province to-day hundreds, yes, thousands of acres of trees that might better be dug up and burned so far as their present condition is concerned. I wish simply to make it plain that large numbers of orchards in this province are at the present time unprofitable.

Last I should be misunderstood as recommending the wholesale destruction of unprofitable trees, let me hasten to add that among the most profitable fruit tree plantations in the entire province (not excepting peaches) are some of these once-neglected apple orchards. How many peach growers in Ontario, or any other country, can show strictly net returns better than one hundred dollars an acre per year, over a series of years? How many apple-growers in the far-famed West can show better average returns? The thing is being done to-day in our own province, but most of us don't know it, and many would refuse to believe it if we were told. And it is being done, not by new plantations, but by orchards 40 and 50 years of age that never saw a spray pump until less than 10 years ago.

There are dozens of splendid orchards still standing idle and any man with the necessary "sand" and a little capital can make lots in Prince Rupert and fruit-growing in British Columbia look wasteful in comparison. "But," you say, "do you really mean to tell us that the apple business in Ontario is not progressing?" I am referring to apples only, and I am quite convinced that if accurate figures were available they would bear out the truth of the following statements. Taking into consideration all those counties of Ontario which formerly pro-

they are compelled to go to New York State or Nova Scotia for them because they are not available in Ontario.

In the face of these facts (if you will permit me to call them such) shall we conclude that apple growing as an industry is progressing or otherwise? Progress is undoubtedly being made in certain localities, but, speaking in the broad, general sense, the progressive areas are small in size and can by no means be pointed out as disproving the general statement that the apple industry of this province has declined.

On one point, at last, we are all agreed; if conditions are as represented in the foregoing, something must be done. Before recommending remedial measures, however, let us look at some of the causes which have led to this state of affairs. Probably we shall not, in many cases, find it necessary to do more than simply "remove the cause," although that operation in itself may be no easy task.

#### CAUSE OF DECLINE

1. The general increase of fungus and insect pests is particularly noticeable. When apples were first grown in this province there were no pests, and fruit developed perfectly without the necessity of any special care on the part of the fruit grower. Some of the new localities in the far west are in this condition at present. Can it be said of us to-day, however, that we have failed to profit by the experience of other countries, or even by the results secured by some of our own number? No man in his senses will deny that control of codling worm and apple spot is perfectly practicable. But in spite of the development of special machinery and materials for the purpose, we have allowed

these two pests to develop at such a rate that in many splendid localities fully 80 per cent. of our apples are disfigured by them.

2. Under the rather general term "Winter Injury" are grouped a number of troubles which seem to grow directly out of the severity of our winter season. It was, of course, necessary to determine by experiment the climatic range of varieties, and recent test winters have shown us plainly what may be expected from planting certain kinds too far north. The counties of Waterloo and Wellington contain scarcely an orchard of growing apples, whereas in former days hundreds of barrels of Baldwins, Greenings, Kings and Spies were shipped out. Spy is considerably harder than the other sorts mentioned, but Kings, Greenings and Baldwins are planted in this district under very imminent risk of serious injury if not of entire loss.

But how has the lesson of 1903-04 been re-



A Portion of the Ontario Fruit Exhibit at the Canadian National Exhibition, Toronto, Ont.

duced apples in commercial quantity:

1. The percentage of No. 1 fruit has decreased in the last 15 years.
2. The percentage of wormy, scabby and otherwise defective apples has increased.
3. There is a smaller actual number of barrels of strictly No. 1 apples packed in this province to-day than there was 15 years ago.

#### INCREASED ACREAGE

All of this in spite of the fact that the actual acreage of orchard has increased. For verification of these statements ask the Dominion Fruit Inspectors and the buyers. Practically the entire commercial output passes through their hands and they can be relied on for an authoritative opinion. The buyers will tell you that the good apples simply cannot be had at any price. Those who cater to the better class of trade state that they can pay \$4.00 a barrel f.o.b., for strictly first class Northern Spies in carloads, but