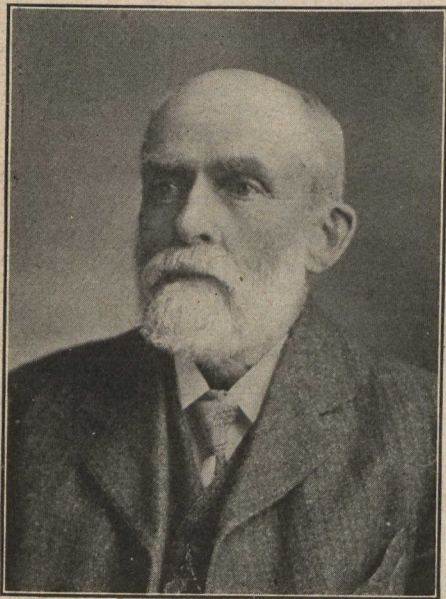


The Ontario Fruit Growers' Association.

A. M. Smith, St. Catharines, Ontario

FIFTY years ago fruit growing as a business was almost unknown in Ontario. The tables of our country were scantily supplied with fruit and a large proportion of that which was consumed came from the United States. It was generally believed that the climate in most parts of the province was unfavorable for fruit growing. Experience has demonstrated, however, that there is scarcely a place where some kind of fruit can not be produced in perfection and many sections that were once considered unadapted to fruit are producing varieties, especially of apples, that can not be equalled in the whole world. Our tables, at one time so scantily supplied with fruit, which was considered a luxury, are now loaded with luscious fruits, which have become a necessity, and we are exporting millions of dollars worth every year. Fruit growing has be-



Mr. A. M. Smith.

The only living member of those who first organized the Fruit Growers Association of Ontario, which will be 50 years old next January,

come one of our most important industries. What has been the most prominent factor in bringing about this great change? I answer without fear of contradiction: "The Fruit Growers' Association of Ontario."

As an account of its origin and some of its early struggles and progress may be of interest to the readers of THE CANADIAN HORTICULTURIST, who are enjoying the "fruits" of its labors, I will attempt to give you a brief outline of its history.

To the late Judge Campbell, of Niagara, and the late Dr. Craigie, of Hamilton, belongs the honor of being the originators of the association. A few people in the Niagara district, particularly near Niagara, Grimsby and Hamilton, were becoming interested in fruit growing. The idea occurred to these men that an organization among fruit growers, followed by meetings at stated periods would be productive of good and stimulate the progress of fruit culture throughout the province. They communicated their views to the late Dr. Beadle of St. Catharines, Geo. Leslie, Sr., of Toronto, and others, who heartily endorsed them. It was finally decided to call a meeting which was held on the January 10th, 1859, in Mechanics' Hall, in the City of Hamilton, the four gentlemen named and fourteen others being present. It was unanimously

resolved to form a fruit growers' association for Upper Canada. The following officers were appointed: Judge Campbell, president; Dr. Hulbert, 1st vice-pres.; Mr. Geo. Leslie, Sr., 2nd vice-pres.; Mr. Arthur Harvey, recording secretary; Mr. D. J. Humphrey, corresponding secretary; Mr. Edward Kelley, treasurer.

Judge Campbell died within a year and was greatly missed by the association, which languished for about two years for the want of their leader. Through the efforts of the late Dr. Craigie, of Hamilton, it was called together again on September 21st, 1860. Nine members were present. Dr. Hulbert, the vice-president, occupied the chair. After a brief session they adjourned to October 24th, each member being requested to bring samples of fruit. At this meeting seventeen members were present with quite a display of fruit, and some profitable discussions took place. It was again decided to adjourn to January 16, 1861, that being the time appointed for the annual meeting and election of officers.

At this meeting, Dr. Hulbert delivered an address on "The Culture of the Grape in Canada." The officers elected were Judge Logie, Hamilton, president; Dr. Hulbert, secretary; Dr. W. Beadle, treasurer. It was afterwards found inconvenient to have the office of secretary and treasurer separate, and they were both given to Dr. Beadle, which office he held for over twenty-three years. Judge Logie held the office of president six years, during which time meetings were held two or three times a year, where fruit was exhibited and discussions upon various points of fruit culture were held and much useful information gained. Committees were appointed to enquire into the condition of fruit culture, varieties grown, and so forth, in different parts of the province. These meetings were held at Grimsby, Hamilton, Paris, St. Catharines and Toronto, and resulted in much useful information being obtained, some of which was published in 1863 in which report, returns were made by secretaries and committees from

thirty different counties of Ontario, enumerating the different fruits successfully grown.

In 1867, the Society had attained a membership of 30. Judge Logie retired from office and was succeeded by Mr. W. H. Mills of Hamilton. In 1868, the society, largely through his efforts, was incorporated under the Agricultural and Arts Act, under the name of "The Fruit Growers' Association of Ontario," and became entitled to a grant from the government of \$350 a year, which enabled it to collect and publish the experience gained by their active workers. This was widely distributed and became a great incentive to the fruit business.

From that time the work made rapid progress. The membership increased to over 200 the first year. The society became a veritable missionary enterprise. It held its meetings in nearly all of the principal towns and cities in the province, preaching and teaching fruit growing and horticulture. Every year there was sent to the members, some tree or plant for them to test and report upon. In this way much valuable knowledge in regard to what was adapted to the different parts of the province was obtained. The membership increased in a few years to about 4,000, and the association became the largest horticultural society in America, if not in the world.

In 1876, the association did more to enlighten the United States and all the nations of the earth, in regard to the climate of Canada and fruit-producing possibilities than had ever been done before, by their exhibition of Canadian fruits at the Centennial World's Fair in Philadelphia. Where fruits will grow in profusion, there must be something more than a land of snow and ice as Canada was thought to be by most of our neighbours at that time. Our exhibit astonished the world. A continuous supply was kept up from early to late fruits, during the season. Visitors could scarcely believe they were grown in the open air in cold Canada.

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The Similkameen Valley

By the representative of the Canadian Horticulturist, who visited British Columbia in the interests of Western Fruit Growers and of this publication.

WITH the completion of the Great Northern Railway from Spokane to Vancouver, the fruit districts of the Similkameen Valley will become a centre of activity. While our representative was in British Columbia last fall he heard so much talk, lacking in definite information regarding the Similkameen, that he decided to visit the Valley and become personally acquainted with the possibilities of that section, for fruit growing.

Until recently the only way to reach Keremeos, which is the largest town in the Valley, was by stage. The Great Northern Railway now have their road completed for a considerable distance past Keremeos, which makes it possible to reach most parts of the Valley, from the east, by rail from Spokane, Wash., or Midway, B.C. Our representative being at Penticton, B.C., travelled by stage over the range of mountains separating the Okanagan and Similkameen Valleys. This route afforded a splendid opportunity for seeing the land at closer range than from a car window.

Unlike some of the other fruit sections in British Columbia, fruit has been grown in the Similkameen for over 30 years, and the results have been everything to be desired. The oldest settler in the Keremeos section is Mr. F. Richter, who has lived there for over 44 years. Although the chief occupation of Mr. Richter has been ranching, he has devoted considerable attention to fruit growing around his home. Perhaps the best way to describe Mr. Richter's success would be to quote his own words. He said: "I find that both hardy and tender varieties of fruit thrive here to perfection. This is accounted for by the low altitude and the dry, sunny atmosphere. This is an irrigation country like most of the best fruit districts in British Columbia. The valley is well watered, however, as the Similkameen River has many tributaries, including the Keremeos and Ashnola, which may be used for irrigation. The Similkameen and Ashnola Rivers will afford a sufficient water supply to irrigate the whole valley, if it is properly utilized.