

packing house, they feel in duty bound to put up a percentage of No. 1, whether there is any fruit of that grade in sight or not. Thus, it is in this particular to which the greater trouble can be traced. I do not wish to be too severe in my criticism of the packers, but it is surprising, to say the least, to see the indifference and carelessness displayed by the ordinary packer in his work. Until such time as some system can be devised to induce those, who are actually engaged in the work of selecting and packing, to take a greater interest, the trade operations can be called little better than a game of chance.

We have two classes of packers: There are those that are simply employed to do the work, and those who are small dealers and superintend their own work. I scarcely know how to designate the latter class. Some of them come forward with a pious and God-fearing sort of an expression and declare that they are unable to sleep at night, through a fear that some of their packers might depart from the path of righteousness. One of the latter class told me that he always made it a practice to put better apples in the middle of the barrel than on the face. This, of course, pleased me and I asked him for his photograph to add to my little collection of curiosities. Another seemed to justify his actions by saying that the first man the world ever saw, showed a little weakness along the apple line, and all down through the centuries that weakness seemed to stick to the apple-man.

THE WORKMANSHIP OF PACKING

In Ontario, we have an army of, perhaps, the best barrel packers in the world, but unfortunately when the busy season comes, men who know little or nothing about the business must necessarily be employed. It is to this class of packers that most of the trouble can be traced, as to poor workmanship.

I wish to call attention specially to what is called "over-pressing." When a packer asks my opinion as to whether a certain package is over-pressed, and while I can plainly see that it is, I feel that I dare not tell him so. It is a well-known fact that barrels showing signs of slackness, will sell from two to four shillings less than "tights."

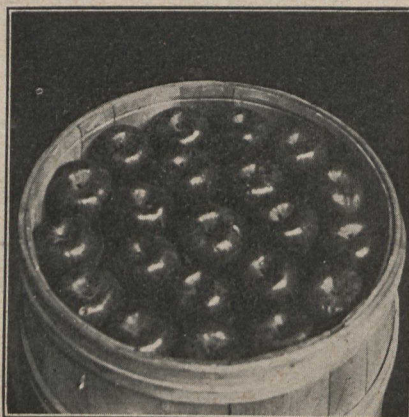
OVER-PRESSING AND SLACKS

There is a prejudice against "slacks," but the slackness produced by waste fruit is what is in the mind of the dealer and he has no time to discriminate between such a "slack" and what is known as an "easy pack"; therefore, when a package shows signs of slackness, it must fall. This is unfortunate, as the "easy pack" is worth shillings more to the fancy trade than the over-pressed package,

where almost every fruit is disfigured by press marks; but having the dollars and cents to the dealers in my mind, I must say to him, have your packages arrive tight if possible. I am not referring here to the hundreds of packages in which the fruit is needlessly crushed and broken, producing the worst kind of "slacks," especially in warm weather packing. These are the kind of "slacks" that are in the minds of the dealers. When tapping the barrel in the head, it has a hollow sound.

MARKETING

In regard to marketing, we have not yet arrived at a perfect plan. The nearest to the ideal is the plan of selling f.o.b. cars at points of shipment. We



A Well-faced Barrel of Ontario Apples

have recommended this from every platform for the last few years, and the idea has been received with such favor that some half a million barrels were sold in this way last season. But what happened? I have discovered that with the ordinary dealer, as soon as he is fully conscious of the fact that his fruit is sold and the price fixed, the same old human weakness creeps in and he does not display the same care in selecting the fruit or in workmanship as he would if the prices depended on the manner that the fruit is put on the market. This, however, does not apply to all the "packs" sold in that way and can be remedied by inspectors paying special attention to "packs" when sales are made in this way.

CO-OPERATIVE MARKETING

I will not discuss the co-operative plan of marketing at any length at present, but it is a matter of regret that in many instances, the growers cannot stand the temptation and abandon the co-operative plan, when speculative buyers offer them apparently big prices.

Under no method has the return been as satisfactory to growers, nor has the reputation of the trade been as well safe-guarded, as under the co-operative plan. Some 200,000 barrels were pack-

ed under this plan last season and the bulk was sold f.o.b. cars, points of shipment. With a few exceptions, the pack turned out satisfactory. Under no other method, can the same uniformity and control of pack be maintained.

With the knowledge of these facts in possession of the growers, it is surprising that they are so easily turned aside and reach a market through some other channel. There is no denying the fact that an effort is being made by the speculative dealers to give this movement a death-blow. The proof of this was shown last season by the very high prices paid here and there in sections where co-operation was in full swing, and this in sections where a few years ago apples remained on the trees for the want of buyers, and where the co-operative movement was started as a remedy.

IRRESPONSIBLE BUYERS

There is another method of marketing which has worked much mischief and that is, where irresponsible buyers swarm the country early in the season and secure thousands of barrels of apples without any means to finance the deals. They then wait for their victim, who very soon turns up. A handsome profit is handed over to buyer No. 1 for his deals, and in the deal he and his relations get fat wages for doing the packing. Buyer No. 2 finds at the close of the season that there is a great shortage in the numbers of barrels represented, that the work has been fraudulently done and that the prospects that seemed so rosy in the early season were only a dream. Of course, it is every man's privilege to engage in any business he wishes to, so long as he does not violate the laws of the land. We have a right to criticise the methods employed, however, and to suggest improvements.

Growers fared well last season, but they must not forget that if the season's operations did not show a profit to the dealers, that they will have to make it good sooner or later. There is a common saying that, "The place to look for a thing is where you lose it." The fruit trade of Canada has assumed enormous proportions. It is up to the growers to look well to their interests and do everything in their power to place the trade on a sound basis.

Feeble growing and unhealthy trees are, as a rule, the results of starvation, poor attention or unfavorable climate.

THE CANADIAN HORTICULTURIST would like to hear oftener from readers who grow raspberries, blackberries, currants, or gooseberries. Send for publication a description of your patch, and tell how you plant, cultivate, prune, pick and market.