

The Fruit Belt of Ontario.

"The gardens and the orchards of Canada were justly reputed to be the best in the world. There were some disadvantages of climatic conditions as compared with the United States, but there were also climatic advantages. The Canadian climate produced apples, peaches and melons inferior to none in the world, and which had first place on the tables of wealth and luxury in New York, London and other world centres." This will seem incredible to the British people, who have been so much accustomed to think of Canada as "Our Lady of the Snows." But the statement comes from one whose position is so high and responsible that he cannot venture to be anything but deliberate, namely, the Premier of Canada.

The Dominion is a land of many climates, as might be expected where the area is three and a half million square miles, or about equal to that of Europe.

The Province of Ontario alone is 78,000 square miles larger than the British Isles, and here, of course, though to a less degree than in the rest of Canada, there are more climates than one. Its most southern part, on the shore of Lake Erie, is in the same latitude as Northern California, Southern France, and Rome in Italy. It need not therefore be incredible that Southern Ontario should grow peaches, grapes and tobacco. England, even in its warmest

spots, cannot grow peaches, except in a greenhouse, or against a wall with the best exposure to the sun. But in Ontario South they grow abundantly in the open air, and a market may be seen in the season where hundreds of wagons are laden with this delicious fruit, and the air is filled with its fragrance. In this favored Province there are wide stretches of peach orchards and grape vineyards extending over miles.

The fruit belt of Ontario extends from east to west for a distance of over 400 miles, and from north to south for 50 to 150 miles. Here is the home of the king of fruits, the apple, in many varieties; and here also are pears, quinces, plums, cherries, strawberries and other small fruits in abundance. But the tenderer fruits, such as the peach, are only produced to perfection in Ontario South.

Much as is the production of fruit in Ontario, the demand in the Dominion and abroad is greater than the supply, and that demand is increasing with the settlement of Northern Ontario and the North-West.

Besides the sale of fresh fruit, an amazing quantity is tinned at innumerable Canadian canneries, especially in the orchard sections of the Province, for distribution throughout Canada and for shipment to the British Isles and elsewhere.