

# Fruit Growing in the Okanagan Valley

H. Gordon, Vernon, British Columbia

THE success achieved within it by a number of old-established growers of fruit has gained a reputation for the Okanagan valley which attracts increasing numbers of land-seekers. The Okanagan valley is reached from Sicamous Junction on the main line of the Canadian Pacific Railway by a branch railroad which runs for 40 miles through the Spallumcheen valley and the northern end of the Okanagan valley to the head of Okanagan Lake. The valley averages three miles in width. The lake lies north and south, and is about eighty miles long. Parallel to this lake at its northern extremity lies the picturesque Long Lake twelve miles in extent, the valley of which runs north for thirty miles, and merges in the Okanagan valley at Kelowna. The Coldstream (or White) valley joins the Okanagan valley from the east close to Vernon, which is situated a few miles from Okanagan Lake and two and a half miles from Long Lake.

## DISTRICTS FOR FRUIT CULTURE

After leaving Sicamous the thriving little towns and fertile districts of Enderby and Armstrong deserve mention first. Here the rainfall appears to be sufficient in some parts to allow growth without irrigation. Vernon is the railway and agricultural centre of the valley. It lies 1,260 feet above sea level, and is surrounded by beautiful country and many orchards, as well as by much land adapted to fruit growing. The most striking feature is the uniform adaptability to fruit culture of large contiguous tracts of land. This is the

is being planted largely in the Coldstream district; this apple is somewhat fastidious in regard to soil and climate, but the growers have confidence that the local conditions are suitable.

Kelowna lies close to Okanagan Lake upon its eastern shore, and is the important centre of a growing district



Harvesting Spys on Coldstream Estate

Twenty-five acres netted in 1905, \$12,000. Photo by Boie containing at present about 3,000 acres of orchard. The same varieties of apple are grown as in the Vernon district, but Yellow Newton Pippin is now popular. The orchard of Mr. T. W. Stirling is the chief of many good orchards in Kelowna, just as that of the

estimated that about 100,000 peach trees have been planted in one settlement alone, that of Summerland, during the last two years; whilst its twin neighbor, Peachland, follows closely upon its example. Triumph, Alexander, Hale's Early and Yellow St. John, are amongst the leading varieties. The growers wisely supplement the growing of peaches with the less hazardous culture of the apple, and produce excellent fruit; but as yet have, of course, placed only a very small fraction on the market of the possible future annual output.

The prospects before these energetic and enterprising settlements are excellent, and they are making sturdy progress under the enthusiastic guidance of Mr. J. M. Robinson. Both places depend for communication only upon the lake steamer, and the settlement named Penticton, situated at the southern extremity of the lake, is at a similar disadvantage. The soil at Penticton resembles generally that of Summerland, and apples and peaches are planted in a similar manner. Thirty thousand acres are here in the hands of the Southern Okanagan Land Co., under the management of Mr. W. T. Stratford. In the old homestead of the property stands a cherry tree which produces fruit in a manner to rival the prolificness of a Kentish orchard. The poetic imagination of the Winnipeg estate agent has calculated on the basis of the doings of this tree the amount of profit derivable from an acre of cherry trees, humorously forgetting that it has taken thirty summers to bring this cherry to its present productive state. Cherries are being planted here as elsewhere throughout the valley, Bing, Lambert and Royal Anne being the most popular varieties. It is probable that Penticton will ultimately prove an important fruit section.

The last twelve months has seen the birth of several new centres designed to attract the fruit grower. Okanagan Centre and East Summerland are amongst the most promising of these, and offer attractions to those who desire to share in the development of a district from its beginning.

## SUCCESSSES

From this brief survey it is evident that the Okanagan valley promises to be an enormous fruit producer. The northern part is proved to be well adapted for apple culture; the southern half is probably a good peach country; throughout the whole valley, cherries, plums, prunes, and pears succeed in properly selected parts. The fruit pro-



Sutton Beauty Apple Trees in Mr. J. L. Webster's Orchard, Vernon

Photograph furnished by Mr. Maxwell Smith

favorite apple district, and seems to have an assured future. The chief varieties grown are Spitzenberg, Jonathan, Wagner, Wealthy, Northern Spy, McIntosh Red and a few others. Cox's Orange Pippin, acknowledged throughout the markets of Europe as the best flavored apple in cultivation,

Coldstream Estate holds the premier position in Vernon.

South of Kelowna, the black loam of the north is replaced generally by a more sandy soil. Several of the few old-established small orchards here have made a success of peach growing, and stimulated others to follow. It is esti-