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The Western Provinces as an Outlet for Ontario Fruit*

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ACCURATE or even approximately correct figures on the quantities of fruit shipped to the western provinces year by year are difficult to obtain. Transportation companies and shippers are in possession of the only sources of information on matters of this kind, and these are not often open to public inspection.

I am indebted to Mr. Charles F. Roland, Development and Industrial Commissioner for the City of Winnipeg, for the following estimate of the total quantities of fruit received in that city from all points during 1907. Fruit from Ontario and from the central United States is usually distributed throughout the prairie provinces from Winnipeg, and is included in this estimate. These figures do not include, however, large quantities which enter these provinces from British Columbia, Washington, Idaho, Oregon and California, and which are distributed from Regina, Brandon and other points west of Winnipeg.

"Fruit received in Winnipeg in car lots from all points during 1907: 48 cars of strawberries, 430 cars of tomatoes, 680 cars of peaches, pears and small fruits other than strawberries, over 600 cars of oranges, and upwards of 1,000 cars of apples. Large as these receipts may appear, one can judge that the receipts will be even double in a very few years, as the population of Winnipeg has grown from 67,000 in 1904 to 118,250 in 1908. I am informed that over seventy per cent. of these receipts was consumed locally."

IMPORTS TO WINNIPEG

The proportions of fruit received from different points and handled in Winnipeg, are estimated by the McNaughton Fruit and Produce Exchange as follows: California, Oregon and other north-western states, fifty per cent.; Ontario, thirty-five per cent.; British Columbia, fifteen per cent.

Mr. A. Mallinson, who has this season bought very largely in Ontario for western firms, estimates the total quantities of fruit shipped to the west from Ontario this year as follows: "83,500 bar-

rels of apples, including a few boxes, estimated at three boxes per barrel; 220 car loads of grapes, estimating 2,400 six-quart baskets as one car load; 73 car loads of tomatoes, pears and cantaloupes. Included in the last item would, in some cases, be a few baskets of plums. A few peaches went forward also."

SHIPMENTS HAVE INCREASED

Mr. A. Gifford informs me that fully twenty per cent. can be added to the above estimate of total shipments. Mr. Mallinson states further that shipments of fruit from Ontario to Winnipeg have increased fifty per cent. during the last five years, and fully 100 per cent. in the last ten years.

From a communication received from Mr. A. McNeill, Chief of the Fruit Divis-

The Most Practical

I am much pleased with THE CANADIAN HORTICULTURIST. I think that it is the most practical paper of the kind printed. Being a fruit-grower and also an inspector of orchards for the British Columbia Government, I take several fruit papers, but THE CANADIAN HORTICULTURIST is the best of all.—J. A. Coatham, New Westminster Co., B. C.

ion, Ottawa, I quote the following: "With reference to the apple trade of 1907, the North-west Transportation Co. handled 100,253 barrels; the C. P. R. handled 18,720 barrels; other boats handled about 10,000 barrels; a total of 128,973 barrels; the G. T. R. and American lines, not known, probably half the C. P. R."

ONTARIO FRUIT IN WEST

These figures show that a large and growing market for fruit exists in the prairie provinces. They show also that large quantities of fruit are annually being marketed there. They fail to show, however, anything regarding the kind or quality of fruit most in demand in that market, and on this point a great many westerners have most decided opin-

ions. The writer had the pleasure(?) of interviewing large numbers of people at Winnipeg Fair this year regarding Ontario fruit methods. The opinions obtained regarding the grading and branding would have delighted the heart of a British Columbia or Oregon shipper, but they surely operated to humble an Ontarian's pride in the quality of our goods and in the honesty of certain of our citizens. A very large number of western people know from experience on the old homestead in Ontario, of the quality of fruit produced here. They will tell you emphatically, however, that since residing in the west they have too often been unable to secure value for money invested in fruit from the home province. They will tell you that in order to get what they pay for, they are compelled to purchase the honestly marked and attractive packages from British Columbia, Oregon and other western points. This condition of affairs, it must be admitted, is not universal, but it is far too common. It is unfortunate that we have in Ontario careless, ignorant, or dishonest growers and shippers, as our hitherto enviable reputation has suffered severely at their hands.

A WESTERN HANDICAP

One hears, too, of wilful unscrupulousness at the other end of the line and it must be said in fairness to Ontario men that not all of the fault lies at the latter's door. In some cases, if we can believe all one hears, western receivers have encouraged misbranding of goods by such advice as this: "Send on your No. 1s if you have any; if you have none, send on your No. 2s, and either change the brand yourself or leave it to us to make No. 1 stock out of it." This is not intended as an arraignment of all fruit shippers and handlers and the honest men in the business (fortunately they are in the majority) will not take it as such. There can be no good reason, however, for trying to hide the real state of affairs and one learns with pleasure of a very radical change which has taken place this season in the methods of transacting business.

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*An address delivered at the convention of the Ontario Fruit Growers' Association held last November.