

THE FRUIT MAGAZINE

VOL. 1.

OCTOBER, 1909.

NO. 1.

The Fruit Industry of British Columbia

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FRUIT growing in British Columbia, like the climatic and soil conditions in its various districts, is so diversified in character and of such importance that it is hardly possible to do the industry anything like justice in the space at our command, and when the reader has perused this article to the end, he must bear in mind that there still remains much to be said on the subject. A historical sketch would be of interest to many, but the wants of intending settlers or investors may be better served by a general outline of the present conditions and prospects of the industry.

Although it is only sixteen years since the first full carload of fruit was shipped out of British Columbia, progress has been fairly rapid and people are now beginning to realize something of its possibilities as a fruit-growing province. In the season of 1904, the fruit crop of British Columbia was valued at \$600,000 and the area under cultivation estimated at 14,000 acres.

In 1905 the area under fruit had been increased to 20,000 acres, and the total revenue derived therefrom was nearly one million dollars. In the same year something like \$500,000 was expended in the purchase and improvement of fruit lands and the average price received for grade No. 1 apples from October 1, 1905, to March 31, 1906, was \$1.27 per 40-lb. box, f. o. b. shipping point. The early varieties started out at \$1 net, and during the latter part of February and March as high as \$2 per box was being paid for strictly No. 1 in carload lots. The average prices of other fruits for the season of 1905 were: Pears, \$1.38 per 40-lb. box; prunes and plums, 75 cents per 20-lb. box; peaches, \$1.15 per 20-lb. box; strawberries, \$2.50 per 24 basket crate; raspberries, \$2.19 per 24 basket crate; blackberries, \$2.40 per 24 basket crate; gooseberries, 5½ cents per lb.; crab apples, 2½ cents per lb.; tomatoes, 5½ cents per lb.; currants, 7 cents per lb.; cherries, 9 cents per lb.

Outside of the quantities consumed in our own cities the chief market for British Columbia fruit is the prairie provinces; a market which will always demand the best that the fruit-grower can produce and in ever-increasing quantities, so that British Columbia need have no fear, no matter how rapidly the industry develops, of an over-production of good, clean commercial varieties. The province is most favorably situated, in being contiguous to the great plains of the middle west, where fruit-growing on a commercial basis is not likely ever to

be a success. That territory is sure to increase rapidly in population and the consumption of fruit will be enormous. It is a curious fact that the average family on the prairies consumes more fruit than do those of British Columbia and it is quite natural, also, to expect that as the farmers of Alberta, Saskatch-

that British Columbia can do is to develop the fruit-growing industry and to send large quantities of first-class fruit properly grown, harvested, packed and shipped into the great grain country east of the Rocky Mountains. This will judiciously advertise the province and bring our own people here as soon as



A BEAUTY SPOT ON GELLATLY RANCH
OKANAGAN VALLEY, B. C.

ewan and Manitoba succeed, within a comparatively few years, in laying by sufficient to keep them in comfort for the rest of their lives, they should look to British Columbia, with its congenial climate, magnificent scenery and tremendous, unexplored and undeveloped natural resources, as a place in which to spend their declining years.

There is little need for this province to spend money in trying to induce immigrants from other countries to come here and settle. The best immigration work

they become tired of the more rigorous climate of the prairies.

The topography of the country from the standpoint of the fruit-grower may be better understood by a reference to the map which accompanies this article. The geological formations and climatic conditions render it necessary to divide the fruit-growing area of the province into nine general divisions.

No. 1 might be called the southwestern coast district, which includes the southern half of Vancouver Island, ad-