

Eliminating the Middleman

How to obtain a fair share of the proce that the ultimate consumer pays for his fruit has long been a problem of the fruit grower. Probably in no part of Ont. 10 has this difficult question been solved to better advantage than in that section of Lambton county in the neighborhood of Forest. President Dan Johnson, of the Ontario Fruit Growers' Association, has done much to solve the problem of how to market fruit without the assistance of the "apple agent."

Last year Mr. Johnson and his brother sold their entire crop of six thousand barrels of apples direct to retailers in western Canada. This crop was the production of a number of orchatds either owned or leased by the Johnson Brothers. In addition to their own holdings the Johnson Brothers. have rented a number of run-out orchards, and by practicing up-to-date cultural methods have been able to bring them up to a stage of production that has netted good profits.

SELLING TO RETAILERS

Mr. Johnson, who was a member of the Forest Fruit Growers' Association, had urged that organization to market their fruit directly to the retailer instead of through wholesale firms. The association felt that the expense necessary to build up a trade with the retailers would be more than the increase in price received. Mr. Johnson, however, had the courage of his convictions, and decided to act in accordanc. with his own judgment. He engaged an agent, who travelled through the west and secured orders from retailers. The result was that after deducting twenty-five cents a barrel to defray the expenses of this agent Mr. Johnson came out almost fifty cents a barrel ahead of the association price. The impression must not be held, however, that the association price was a poor one. While the average price received by apple growers in Ontario last year was not more than one dollar fifty cents a barrel, the average price received by the associations was two dollars fifty cents.

A large portion of Mr. Johnson's income is derived from peaches. The entire crop of five thousand baskets, from his fouryear-old trees, was disposed of to a firm in a large Ontario town at prices ranging from seventy-nine cents to ninety cents a basket. One peach tree produced a crop of fourteen baskets. Another record tree was a thirty-five-year-old Baldwin, from which were picked twenty-six barrels of apples, and which when sold gave a net profit of eighty-four dollars.

The marketing of the fruit is not the only phase of fruit growing in which Johnson Brothers have eliminated the middleman. They have a cooperage shop where they make all their own barrels. In addition, they have a private evaporator plant where all the culls and scrubs are disposed of to advantage. Even the skins and cores are prepared and shipped to Germany, where they are utilized for the manufacture of jelly. They also have their own packing and storage house and have their own traveller in the west.

The Niagara fruit district will be well advertised at the Panama Exhibition to be held in San Francisco. Arrangements are being made by A. W. Despard, of the Dominion Government Department of Immigration, for the preparation of an exhibit there of fruit grown in that district.

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