

EARLY TOMATOES.

EXTENT OF THE INDUSTRY IN ONTARIO.

The production of early tomatoes to supply the demand before the first of the main crop matures has assumed considerable proportions in the more favored districts, namely, the Niagara peninsula, the Leamington district in Essex County, and the neighborhood of Toronto, and is carried on to a lesser extent throughout the tomato growing sections of the Province.

The summer was already well advanced when the investigation commenced, and this fact, coupled with the great extent of the area to be covered, and the large number of canning factory districts to be visited, rendered it almost impossible to pay any attention to this portion of the industry. In this respect another deterring element was that the investigation commenced in the eastern portion of the Province and the really early sections were not reached until the close of August, when the early crop was well over and the main crop coming in.

In the United States it is claimed that the amount of tomatoes annually put on the market in the fresh state is equal to the amount put up in cans. There is, however, no definite reliable information on this point, but certainly the amount sold in the fresh state in Ontario and the North-West is far below the amount taken by the canning factories. In the States the tomato is produced out of doors almost the whole year round, and doubtless the production of the great truck growing regions of the South considerably helps to swell the amount marketed in the raw state, in that country.

While in this country a large number of tomatoes are consumed in the fresh state, all the time the main crop is maturing, yet these cannot be classed as early tomatoes, the season for which may be said to extend only from July 1st to August 15th.

In the Leamington district, including Kingsville, Ruthven, Essex Centre, and Windsor, the total shipment during the above mentioned period, exclusive of those consigned to Winnipeg would approximate to 40,000 eleven-quart baskets. Of the extent of the shipments in the Niagara and other districts, I have no information at all reliable. The task of collecting information on this point is complicated, and necessitates the thorough co-operation of the express companies and wholesale fruit and vegetable produce handlers. An examination of the express companies' shipping bills at the individual stations is not altogether satisfactory, as the consignments are often mixed and merely recorded on the bill as so many baskets of fruit, the actual amount of each product not being specified. Also between July 1st, and August 15th, a considerable quantity of tomatoes are placed directly in the hands of the retailers throughout the Province by the growers themselves.