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The Effect of the War on Fruit Prices

Fruit growers everywhere are wondering what effect the war will have on fruit prices. The following views on this point, of well known authorities, have been obtained by The Canadian Horticulturist:

P. W. Hodgetts, Secretary Ontario Fruit Growers' Association, Toronto, Ont. "Without doubt the European war will lower the prices of our apples and we must be prepared to accept just enough to make living wages and fair returns on our investments, perhaps less. The crop over the entire continent is good and prices would have been lower than last year if the war had not occurred. With millions of people affected by the shutting down of factories, absence of soldiers and breadwinners at the front in all large countries except the United States, disturbed trade conditions, both here and abroad, the outlook is far from favorable. About three million barrels of our apples, besides millions of pounds of dried apples are sent yearly to Germany, Great Britain, Denmark, France, Holland and Belgium. The greater part of the trade will be lost, and the fruit must be consumed at home, adding a large volume to that usually marketed here. The only policy seems to be to sell as much as possible this fall at lower prices, then prepare to pack and store the balance awaiting more favorable conditions of trade later in the year. By all means, pick and pack only the best grades this year."

Senator E. D. Smith, Winona, Ont.: "I feel that the effect of the war will be very injurious on the prices of Canadian fruits. Fruit is more or less of a luxury and in times of financial stress people are sure to cut off luxuries first. Furthermore, the shipping of apples to the Old Country will be under less favorable conditions than usual, not only as to freight rates and insurance, but the consumptive power of the British people will be impaired by the war. The two kinds of fruit which I look to be affected seriously will be apples and grapes. We have no peaches of any consequence in the country to be affected. Our plum and pear crops are comparatively light, and will be sold at reasonable prices, though not nearly so high as they would bring under normal conditions."

A Prominent Government Official: "I hesitate to venture an opinion as to the effect the present European war will have on the demand and prices for Canadian apples and Canadian fruit generally, because there are many uncertain factors in the situation which may change rapidly in the course of a week or two. With shipping, freight rates and marine insurance rates in a state of flux and the exchange market demoralized it will likely be those who know the least about the actual situation who will be most ready at this time to offer a hard and fast prediction. In Great Britain the question of unemployment will have an important bearing on the demand for Canadian fruit. A great many large manufacturing industries in the Old Country, which depend absolutely on the export trade, will be closed for an indefinite period and the purchasing power of a large section of the public will therefore be considerably diminished. In another week or two it is probable that the question of interrupted shipping, freight rates and the financing of export shipments will be better determined and that a forecast can be made with some degree of confidence."

Dominion Fruit Division: In its August report this division says: "With European countries in their present unsettled state, it would be imprudent to give any but the most indefinite prediction until some more..."

(Continued on page 235.)

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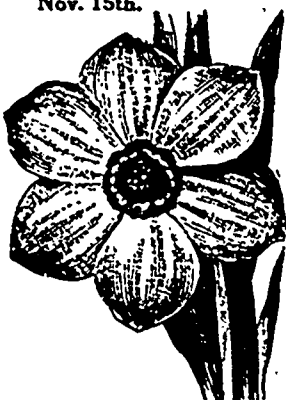
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