

# The Canadian Horticulturist

Vol. XXIX

MAY, 1906

No. 5

## Fruit Should be Consigned Direct to Retailers

NOW that Canadian fruit growers are beginning to cooperate, more attention is being given to the marketing end of the fruit industry than ever before. The result is that growers are finding that there is a host of middlemen, both on this and on the other side of the Atlantic, who have been absorbing the greater part of the price paid for the fruit by the consumers. The returns that ultimately reach the growers are, after all, astonishingly small when compared with the price for which the fruit is finally sold in Great Britain.

Growers should receive cash for their fruit before it leaves their hands. Investigation shows that the most foolish practice is the shipment of fruit to dealers in Great Britain to be sold on commission. While, probably, the great majority of the dealers are honest, many are not, and these men rob the growers right and left. Cases of this kind have come to light nearer home, at Winnipeg, for instance, and even in Toronto, the good.

The various cooperative fruit growers' associations in Ontario have had no difficulty selling their fruit for cash f.o.b. Most of them could have sold several times the amount of apples they did had they had them. "One buyer offered to purchase 50,000 barrels of apples from us last year," said Mr. D. Johnson, of the Forest Association, to THE HORTICULTURIST, recently, "and we could have sold 100,000 barrels had we had them." Remarks to the same effect have been made to THE HORTICULTURIST by officers of most of the other cooperative associations in the province. This shows that when growers cooperate and are able to offer fruit, properly graded, in considerable quantities, they will be able to sell it readily for cash and at satisfactory prices.

The cooperative associations should now carry their work a step farther by eliminating the middlemen in Great Britain and selling direct to the retailers or groups of retailers. Not only are Canadian growers beginning to realize the need for action in this direction, but the British retailers are awaking to the fact that they can increase their profits greatly by dealing direct with the Canadian producers. Evidence of this is afforded by several letters that are in

the possession of THE HORTICULTURIST that were sent to Mr. A. E. Sherrington, of Walkerton, the well-known manager of the Walkerton Fruit Growers' Association, by leading retailers in different cities in Great Britain.

One of these letters, from a fruiterer and florist in Liverpool, shows clearly how the British retailers are waking up and beginning to endeavor to order their fruit direct from the Canadian growers. This letter reads in part as follows:—

"I think it would be much better if the grower could send his apples direct to the retail man, as I have sometimes paid 12 to 60 cents a barrel profit to the wholesale merchants in addition to the wholesale charges that they had to pay to the auctioneer. You will see, there-

### The Best

Without being asked, I wish to state that I think the April number of THE CANADIAN HORTICULTURIST is the best edition of any horticultural paper that has ever been published in the Dominion of Canada.

G. C. CREELMAN,  
Pres. Ont. Agri. Coll., Guelph.

fore, that there is a lot of profit made out of the fruit between the time it leaves the grower and the time it reaches the retailer. I ordered only 40 boxes from you but I am using about 30 barrels a week. I have bought this morning XXX Greenings from Brighton, Ont., for which I had to pay four dollars each. Barrels of Baldwins also cost four dollars, while some barrels of Kings cost five dollars and fifty cents. How do these prices compare with those the Canadian growers probably received for this fruit? I feel sure that if I can get the apples direct so much cheaper, a big demand will be created for them and I shall be only too pleased to do business with you whenever you can get the right quality of stuff."

Another letter is from a firm in an inland city in England asking for 200 barrels of XXX Baldwins, subject to gov-

ernment inspection. A third letter was written by a firm in Leicester and reads as follows:—

"Will you please quote me for 25, 50, 100 and 200 barrels of apples f.o.b., and rate to Liverpool. I want to induce our local retail fruiterers' association to buy direct from the growers. I will place your reply before the committee as soon as I receive it."

These letters show what a splendid opening there is for our fruit growers to deal direct with the retailers in Great Britain, if they will only recognize their opportunity. In regard to the first letter, growers will realize that if the apples sold for four dollars a barrel to the retailers in Great Britain, the middlemen must have pocketed \$1.25 to \$1.50 on each barrel, as the prices paid the growers this year for XXX fruit ranged from \$1.25 to \$1.50 a barrel. If to this is added \$1.25 for railway, shipping and similar charges, and that is a reasonable allowance, there is left \$1.25 to \$1.50 a barrel. Most, if not all, of this could be saved were our growers to ship direct to the retailers.

### UNSATISFACTORY FEATURES

Last fall Mr. Sherrington spent a number of weeks in Great Britain, during which period he made it a point to watch the manner in which Canadian fruit is handled and to talk with retailers in regard to direct shipments. His trip has convinced him that Canadian fruit growers lose large sums of money every year by having their fruit sold on commission. He is of the opinion, also, that were a representative of the growers to visit the retailers he could work up a demand sufficient to absorb all the XXX fruit packed in Ontario.

In a recent letter to THE CANADIAN HORTICULTURIST, Mr. Sherrington speaks plainly on a number of these points. After referring to the many benefits that would follow were our fruit growers to sell their fruit through local cooperative associations, Mr. Sherrington says:—"Last, but by no means least, the fruit should be sold f.o.b. at the packing house, for why, in the name of common sense, should fruit growers send their fruit to any man, or firm of men, to dispose of as he or they please? Are there any other products of the farm that are