

## Fruit Packing and Fruit Packages

J. J. Philp, Winnipeg, Man.

IN discussing the packing and packages of fruit the fact that different localities have different methods of working, not only as to the different styles of the package used, but also as to the manner in which they are packed, must be considered. Winnipeg is the best place in Canada for studying those several methods as well as for offering opportunities for judging the merits in the light of actual results.

It must not be assumed that because the writer does not approve of any particular style or styles of packages, that he is hostile to the trade of the locality from which those packages come, nor is it to be assumed that in all cases the packages so condemned are a failure as a carrying package; or in other words, that the fruit packed in those packages is going to spoil because it is in those packages. What is wanted is a selection of the best as proven by past experience, and then an almost absolute uniformity on the part of the shippers, not only from a locality, but from the whole province.

The advantage of having a uniform package can be illustrated by supposing a merchant in telephone communication with a customer who wants a few boxes of pears. In the event of the order being for Washington Territory, California, Oregon, or British Columbia pears, the merchant has to give only the name of the place, the variety, and the price, and his customer knows at once what he may expect to get. Those places have a package so nearly uniform that there is practically no variation in the quantities contained, and in every case they will be carefully wrapped in paper procured expressly for the purpose. Supposing, however, the deal is being made for a lot of Ontario pears, the amount of explanation required as to the size of the box or crate, the quantity it contains, and the condition they are in, will take up time, and require the most minute description. Indeed he will be a most optimistic dealer who will in any but very exceptional cases, and then only after the most careful examination, guarantee that what he has to offer can be depended upon to turn out satisfactorily in every particular. Want of uniformity in size and in ripeness often causes a lot that might otherwise, with more care and attention to selection, turn out satisfactorily, to be considered an inferior lot. Their value as a first-rate article for the retail merchant to handle is very much lessened.

That the box used by the California packers

presents the best package for the shipment of pears, and peaches, will be admitted by all who have had an opportunity to judge their merits and compare them with those in use in Ontario. Not a little of their superiority consists in the convenience with which cars can be loaded, by putting the boxes on their side across the car, leaving a space of from one and a half to two inches. Strips should be laid on the top of the boxes flush with end and lightly tacked to each box. Have the ends of the strips come out close to the side of the car. The next row can then be placed on the top of the first. They can be piled six or eight tiers high, and only touch each other at the ends. Bring the piles forward to nearly the centre of the car, and then put in a strong stanchion, nailing firmly. The car is then loaded so firmly that the fruit would hardly be displaced if the car was derailed. In refrigerator cars which would be used for this purpose a perfect system of ventilation will thus be secured, and every box will get the benefit of the circulation of fresh cool air, whereas with the numerous and varied collection of packages in use in Ontario this would be impossible.

This is the way I would recommend for shipping all early apples, such as Red Astrachans, Alexander, Wealthy, and indeed, all varieties, either cooking or table apples, up to the time that the fall apples come in, when they can be more profitably shipped in barrels.

Inquiries made among the merchants throughout the country has shown that not a few of them are in favor of boxes for even the earlier fall varieties. As some of them put it, they can sell a box often where the capacity or the facilities of the customer would not allow him to handle a barrel, and when he finishes that one he comes back for another.

In grapes the present style of baskets is probably as good as anything that can be procured, but something ought to be done to compel a strict uniformity of shape and weight. The manner of loading cars with these baskets can, however, easily be improved on. To pile those light, fragile baskets as they often are, 12 to 14 high, with the weight of all the upper ones resting on the lowest tier, is almost certain to result in those beneath being destroyed. I have seen them crushed almost flat. This could be overcome by a light double deck, which would not only carry the weight of the upper half but secure much better ventilation.

writes us in glowing terms of the fruit of that rich province. "The sooner we of the east disabuse our minds of the idea that British Columbia cannot grow superb apples," he says, "the better; for now that they have taken to their production in the higher areas among the mountains, they are much superior to the product of the low sections. I have eaten Spys out here that were superior in every way to the best Spys of Ontario. The fruit-growing possibilities of the country are immense. It is more than likely that Japan will afford a good market for much of the coast fruit. By Commercial Agent McLean's report we see that they would gladly exchange their oranges for our apples."

## The Fruit Trade at Montreal

E. H. Wartman, Montreal

The apple may well be called the king of fruits. Its longevity under proper conditions makes it bring a large revenue to our country. The juices and tender pulp make it a general favorite. At present Montreal has a very short crop of apples stored. Five thousand barrels would be the extreme figure, and of these perhaps 60 per cent. are second quality.

A large number of barrels are marked Talman Sweets. This apple is best known in country homes where it is called the family apple. In the city it is not thought so much of and usually brings a low price, not as much as it should, considering its good keeping qualities and adaptation to various uses.

One apple a day furnished each inhabitant of Montreal and suburbs, would mean 800 barrels; one week at this rate would completely exhaust present store. However, when prices run \$4 to \$5 a barrel for No. 1, the average mechanic gets a small supply. The price is likely to run much higher before the new crop is fit for use in July.

Bananas and oranges, however, are within the reach of the masses. Fifteen years ago this month I paid 50 cents per dozen for bananas, to-day 20 cents would buy the same. This is due to the large production on banana plantations, encouraged by increased consumption. It is not an uncommon thing to get a piece of banana pie, but 20 years ago it was one of the unknown dishes. The month of March, too, generally brings large quantities of maple sugar and syrup. This has a tendency to make dull sale for fruits of all kinds. Although one kind of fruit may run very high in price, yet there is always a substitute to appease the appetite. The export apple trade has not been as remunerative to some Montreal men as could have been wished this year, but they consider it largely their own fault. Men of 20 years' experience have lost money although it was a record year for making money. No. 1 Spy, Baldwin, King, Russet, and Greening have sold throughout the season at 18 to 25 shillings. What better prices could be expected. Buyers should remember that goods well bought are half sold, but it takes some artisans a long time to master the art of packing fruit. This is the secret of success.

## Our Nova Scotia Letter

G. H. Vroom

Perhaps in no other province in Canada is there such a diversity in the methods employed in the fruit industry as in Nova Scotia. The fruit houses along the railway are used for storing as well as packing fruit. I believe I am well within the bounds of truth when I say that 80% of the fruit stored in the fruit houses is packed by the grower and bought by the dealer in that condition, and the result is lack of uniformity and a very irregular pack. From the up-to-date grower the dealer gets a first-class pack, but from the grower who packs his fruit according to the ideas that have been handed down from one generation to another by people who do not realize that the world is moving and that the consuming public are demanding a better article, the dealer gets poorly graded fruit.

## Prince Edward Island Notes

Father A. E. Burke, Alberton

THERE has been little trouble this year in finding a local market for all the apples harvested here last fall, and many more. Still, we see by the press that Mr. F. G. Bovyer, of Georgetown, with Senator Ferguson, has made the usual winter shipment of Ben Davis apples to Britain. The prices for prime fruit of the long-keeping sorts on the other side have been all that could be desired.

### NO BREAKDOWNS

In striking contrast to last year, this year has lessened the risk to young and closely planted orchards of any breakdowns from snowbanks to a minimum. The ravages of the past season are, however, quite manifest in places, and something should be done to clear away the damaged and diseased portions of orchards this spring. The instructor could not possibly get round to all who requested his services last season; it is to be hoped that at least the necessary knowledge of his methods will be well within the reach of all this year. It is useless to plant trees if they are not kept in such a way

as to be of use and profit to the growers. Besides a badly kept orchard, like badly kept fields, are a severe reflection on the owners, as well as a general source of disedification. Repair the damaged trees of last year or remove them.

### DEFINE TWO'S AND THREE'S

Commercial agent at Leeds, Jackson, writes, asking for a properly packed no. 2 apple as an essential to the British trade. "It is just as necessary that the XX (no. 2) apples should be as well graded and packed as XXX (no. 1), and it is from these apples that the farmers of Canada would make their largest profit, because if they are not shipped they are an absolute loss." However much or little we may assent to this latter opinion, there can be no doubt but that the time is ripe for a more complete classification of our apples under the Marks Act.

### BRITISH COLUMBIA APPLES

The ex-president of the Fruit Growers' Association of Prince Edward Island, Mr. Edward Bayfield, is sojourning in British Columbia, and