

Educational Work in Fruit Packing

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IT is a commonly accepted and true statement that the packing of British Columbia fruit is superior to that of any of the other provinces of Canada. This is due to a number of factors, the first of which is the influence of the high-class packing in Oregon and Washington, while the long distance to market centres, and the absence of the knowledge of poorer methods of packing, have had a great share in giving British Columbia this pre-eminence. This position has been attained only by a large amount of hard work on the part of her people, and not less so on the part of the Department of Agriculture.

The seasons of 1909 and 1910 have witnessed a tremendous advance in methods of packing, and so of grading, even in British Columbia. In that time, the fruit growers of the province have strengthened their packing and marketing organizations tremendously, and the output of fruit, coincident with this, has increased very largely. This has made possible the importation of the best class of United States packers, and has permitted a still higher standard of packing than previously attained.

The most notable advances since 1908 have been along two lines—the discarding of the square packs and the adoption of the diagonal, and the use of wrapping paper for practically all grades of market apples. The advances which we will next see are the marking of the

number of apples on the end of the box and a still higher standard of grading than we have yet had.

THE MORAL STANDARD.

Perhaps the greatest factor in creating a high moral standard among fruit growers in the matter of fruit packing, has been the influence of the Packing Schools conducted by the Department of Agriculture. This work was inaugurated two years ago in the Okanagan Valley, at which time the Department opened classes under the instruction of the two most proficient packers, at which a limited number of pupils received twelve practical lessons of three hours each, for a fee of one dollar for the course. These schools immediately met popular favour in that district, and in all, an attendance of one hundred and twenty was enrolled.

In the fall of 1910, the exceptionally large apple crop on new orchards doubled the number of men who had fruit to pack, but did not know how to pack it. The applications for packing schools from all districts of the province rolled in to the department, and despite the fact that the fee was raised to three dollars, and that a local corporate body in each district was required to guarantee a minimum attendance of twelve, and to provide many of the requirements, the demand did not at all slack off. The department insisted on employing only apple packers of undoubted qualifica-

tions, and, on this basis, was enabled to discriminate, holding apple packing schools only where they would be most urgently required. In all, thirty packing schools were conducted, at which the total attendance of pupils was three hundred and eighty-four.

The attendance at each school was limited to fifteen. The fee of three dollars prevented the attendance of any but genuinely interested fruit growers. The instructors were of the highest class. The enthusiasm of the people was all that could be desired. Under the circumstances, it is not surprising to learn from the reports of the instructors that at least seventy-five per cent. of the pupils would, in their opinion, make satisfactory packers.

THE STANDARD REQUIRED

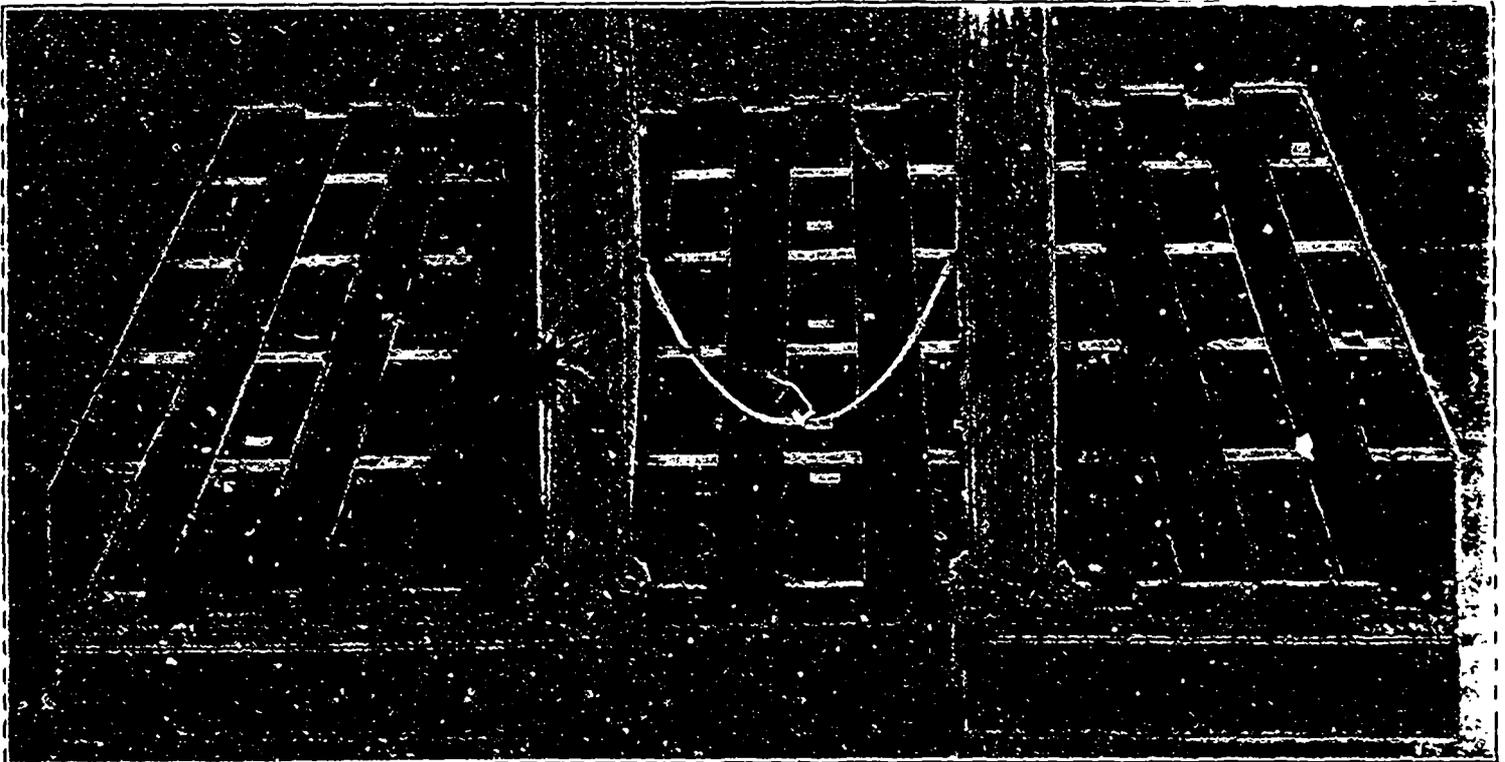
Diplomas will be given to the pupils of packing schools who attain to the following standard:

(1) Are given a score of 75 per cent. for efficiency by the packing school instructor.

(2) Make a display of five boxes of packed apples at their local fair, to be judged by an assistant horticulturist of the department, gaining a score of seventy-five per cent.

(3) Pack for one season with a reputable packing house, which certifies to their speed and efficiency as practical packers.

Only eight diplomas were given for the season of 1909-10. It is the intention of the department to make these diplomas valuable certificates of competency, and it is not likely that any



The Kelowna District Exhibit that Won the First Prize of \$500 at the Canadian National Apple Show, at Vancouver, B.C., Last November. Notice all the different "packs" that are shown.