

Raid May 4, 1915

A Memorandum setting forth the Present Situation of the Fruit-growing Industry
of Canada, and in particular that of British Columbia.

PROTECTION FOR CANADIAN APPLES.

(Compiled for the British Columbia Fruit-growers' Association.)

This memorandum shows, under the following heads, some of the essential conditions affecting the success of Canada's apple industry:—

- (1.) Production in the United States:
- (2.) Western Canada as a market for Apples:
- (3.) Influence of United States apples in Canadian markets:
- (4.) Canada's orchard industry:
- (5.) British Columbia's orchard industry.

(1.) PRODUCTION IN THE UNITED STATES.

In the period 1900 to 1910 the average commercial production of apples in the United States was about 35,000,000 barrels, which, in relation to the demand, usually ensured fair prices to producers. The industry naturally began to expand, and by 1912 it was evident that production had overtaken demand. In 1914 the total production, according to the United States Department of Agriculture, equalled 86,300,000 barrels, of which about 45,000,000 went into commercial channels and much of the balance went to waste. Prices declined to a low level in 1912 and to a point disastrous to the grower in 1914.

In conjunction with the general increase in the United States production and decline in prices there must be noted the phenomenal development of apple-orcharding in the four North-western States—Washington, Oregon, Montana, and Idaho—which sections are special competitors of British Columbia. The North-western States were almost negligible in apple production even as late as ten years ago. Tremendous areas had been and were being planted, however, estimated by the State Departments at about 550,000 acres of apples; and though only a small portion of this is yet in bearing, the commercial production of 1914 was about 14,000 car-loads. The most conservative estimates of those intimate with the facts placed the estimated production at the present rate of increase in these States in 1920 at 40,000 to 50,000 car-loads.

The United States, generally, is evidently reaching a period of very heavy production of apples, and in the North-western States there will certainly be a heavy overproduction in relation to normal market for these apples in the United States.

While prices were low in 1912, they were disastrously so in 1914. In the past season the North-western States consigned to Western Canada hundreds of car-loads, either without any guarantee as to minimum price, or with a guarantee of 30 cents a box on the cars at shipping-point. Quite aside from all the costs of growing the apples, the 30 cents does not equal the packing and shipping costs.

(2.) WESTERN CANADA AS A MARKET FOR APPLES.

It is in the four Western Provinces that the British Columbia apple-crop must be largely marketed. In 1913 the American shipments into this district aggregated nearly 2,000 car-loads, and in 1914, despite tremendous crops in Ontario and British Columbia, they still equalled 556 car-loads; the total consumption of the four Western Provinces was about 3,475 car-loads in 1914.

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