



A FERRY ACROSS THE SASKATCHEWAN AT EDMONTON, ALBERTA.

### Pruning Apple Trees.

There is no better or more convenient time for pruning the apple orchard than during the latter part of March or first weeks of April. At this period the farmer has ample time to do the work carefully, and, therefore, systematically; but if left until the rush of spring work begins, pruning, if attempted at all, will be done in a hurried and unskilful manner.

If the word "training" were substituted for the word "pruning," the term would better convey the idea as to how the work should be done. The process of training an apple tree into a properly-formed head should begin with the season when it is first set out from the nursery. From three to five branches should be left, starting from the trunk at points which will result in a well-balanced top and without forming a crotch, as this in after years will often cause the tree to split when heavily laden with fruit or during a severe wind or ice storm. I may perhaps touch on this point more fully in a future issue in outlining the work of setting out an orchard.

When the head of the tree has been rightly started, it should receive a light pruning every spring, cutting out such twigs as are growing in a wrong direction or intersect one another, always aiming to keep a well-balanced head in view, fairly open in the center to admit free circulation of air and sunlight, for without these, fully-developed and high-colored fruit cannot be obtained. With trees thus pruned, spraying can be much more readily and thoroughly performed, and the work of gathering the fruit will be much lessened. If the pruning is done every season, most of the limbs to be removed can be cut out with a sharp knife, which is a much better implement than the pruning shears, as these pinch the bark and injure the delicate cambium or tissue of inner bark, and a badly-healed wound results. If through unavoidable cause it is found necessary to remove a large limb, it should be done when the sap is flowing freely through the tree. It should be cut off with a fine-tooth saw as close to the trunk as possible, without regard to the size of the wound, which should at once be covered with a coat of thick paint or soft grafting wax to exclude the rain and prevent drying out by the sun. If treated in this way, a large wound will soon heal over with fresh bark, and not much injury to the tree will result. A quite common practice is to leave a stub of several inches when removing a large limb. When this is done the cambium dies back and the wound does not heal over, with the result that rot enters and works its way into the heart of the tree, which in time is quite destroyed. If one were to go through the orchard several times during the months of June and July and remove, by rubbing off with the hand, all suckers which have made an appearance, a great deal of work would be avoided the following spring. We are always careful when pruning or picking fruit to wear rubber boots or overshoes so as not to injure the bark on the limbs. Different orchardists have different ideas as to training the trees to form high or low heads. A medium course is always safe to follow, endeavoring to get such spreading varieties as Greenings to grow as upright as possible, and an upright type like the Spy to develop a more spreading form, always aiming to keep the center of the tree fairly well open.

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### Desirable Changes in the Fruit Marks Act.

No one can doubt that the Fruit Marks Act is a good thing, at least so it seems to the writer. For certainly it has given definite shape to the former vague yearnings after reform which almost everybody in the remotest way connected with fruit-growing has had in the past. It has made the honest and conscientious packer more careful; he has given more thought to his work and has put himself in the way to learn anything new that could be learned. It must certainly have made the few dishonest growers, who systematically plan to defraud their customers, more cautious as to how they fill up the middle of their barrels with worthless trash; and it cannot help gladdening the hearts of our customers when they find that they can now buy our apples with much greater assurance that every barrel will contain edible apples properly packed. But while all this is most emphatically true, there are, it seems to me, several changes and additions which ought to be made in the law before it shall fully meet the needs of the case. The Act has been most thoroughly discussed by our "Horticultural Club," which meets at the School of Horticulture in Wolfville, and which numbers among its members many practical fruit-growers of large experience.

After a careful consideration of the matter they passed a set of resolutions on the subject, the most important of which are as follows:

"Resolved, that we recommend that the Fruit Marks Act be amended so as to classify apples into four grades, as follows:

"1st.—'Extra,' consisting of extra large, well-grown specimens of one variety, sound, of nearly uniform size and normal shape, and containing not less than 90 per cent. free from defects and properly packed.

"2nd.—'No. 1,' consisting of large, well-grown fruit of one variety, sound, of nearly uniform size and normal shape, and containing not less than 90 per cent. free from defects and properly packed.

"3rd.—'No. 2,' consisting of smaller specimens of one variety, sound, of nearly uniform size and normal shape, and containing not less than 90 per cent. free from defects and properly packed.

"4th.—Either 'drops,' 'culls,' or 'No. 3,' consisting of culls, windfalls, misshapen, inferior or defective fruit.

"And, whereas there is nowhere in the Act any protection given to the grade marks of the grower,

"Therefore, resolved that section 10 be amended so as to provide the same penalty for altering or effacing the packer's grade marks, by any unauthorized person, as for tampering with the inspector's marks."

This last clause was suggested by Mr. R. W. Starr, who had had the marks of poorer grades of fruit shipped to Halifax removed from the barrels and "No. 1" substituted, and the fruit then re-shipped to Newfoundland, with the result that the reputation of his brand was injured.

In reference to the marks for the four grades of fruit, considerable discussion arose as to whether it was better to adopt those suggested or a system of Xs. Several growers present had had consignments sold in England when the one X sold as the lowest grade and the three XXX as the highest, whereas just the reverse was intended, and a member of the club reported that Mr. W. H. Chase, who probably ships more apples than any other man in Nova Scotia, was strongly in favor of discontinuing the use of X as a grade mark. On the other hand, some members thought that to mark a barrel "No. 2" was prejudicial to it, especially in the Liverpool market. But it was pointed out that while this might have been so in the past, this feeling was passing away, and if it could be arranged so that No. 2 apples would differ only in size from No. 1, there would be a good demand for this grade, as many dealers preferred it on account of getting a greater number of apples per barrel.

But, however men may differ in opinion as to what grade marks should be adopted, all must agree that some simple system of marking which shall bring about greater uniformity in grades and in the designation of grades is certainly to be desired.

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INTERIOR VIEW OF ONE OF THE COMPARTMENTS IN BEE CELLAR—SEE ARTICLE, PAGE 218.