

OUR FRUIT MARKETS.

Mr. A. H. PETTIT (Grimsby,) read the following paper on this subject:

The question allotted to me at this time, Our Fruit Markets, is one to which the Fruit Growers' Association of Ontario should give their most careful consideration, for it is to this Association the fruit growers of Ontario are now looking to protect that industry which they have done so much to build up. This has been accomplished by encouraging the industry, by the distribution of correct information as regards varieties and their adaptability to the different sections of this Province, and by a clear and honest criticism of varieties of doubtful value for general cultivation. Now that fruit growing in this country is becoming such an important branch of industry, and our fruits almost second to none of the exportable products of the farm, might not our energies be directed towards giving reliable crop prospects; not only of this continent but of the fruit producing nations of the world. In this way we might give the fruit growers of this province, whom we are elected to serve, all the information it is possible to obtain, and that at the earliest moment for their advantage. This, however, may require an increased expenditure on behalf of this Association; but I believe the work would result in increased receipts, and in a more general interest in our work.

I would not like to trespass long on the valuable time of this meeting to suggest a new system of marketing our fruit, for, I believe, in the matter of small fruits, the growers are working out a system that will eventually prove very satisfactory to all concerned; but, in the matter of foreign shipments, a change in our methods is much to be desired. We find, in all the large cheese producing sections of Ontario, certain days appointed as market days, at convenient centers of trade, where buyers and sellers congregate, and, by sample, the deal of hundreds of tons is made. I can see no obstacle in the way of such a course being pursued by the apple growers of Ontario, and their fruit being disposed of in the same manner; subject, of course, to inspection by competent inspectors, appointed by the Government, and, that a barrel of apples, when branded No. 1, shall contain apples of fair size and color, free from scab and worm holes; properly packed in standard size packages; and No. 2 to contain as may be defined, but a certain fixed standard of excellence. By thus establishing fruit markets in several of the large fruit producing sections of Ontario we may bring the buyer and seller face to face, and thus avoid the difficulties which many have found to their cost when apple grower and apple buyer are several thousand miles apart. I have not been a shipper this year, but I have seen a great many catalogues of sales, and, like the woman's letter, not complete without a postscript, the catalogue would not be complete without the words "slack," "wet" or "wasty," and, of course, prices to correspond. If the system of handling fruit in the Old Country markets is satisfactory to the trade there, I think I am safe in saying it is not to the fruit shippers of this country, and the sooner we establish a better system of disposing of the apple crop of this country the better for all concerned. A change, however, must emanate from the fruit growers themselves, and, this being a representative body, we might fairly discuss some method whereby we might improve on the present system. We have, in the ranks of this Association, men of experience, of judgment, and possessed of an earnest desire to promote the welfare of the fruit growers of Ontario.

I can conceive of no more equitable system than by bringing, if possible, the buyer and seller together at central points; the grower to return and pack his apples according to rule, in order to insure the inspector's brand of No. 1 or No. 2, as the case may be; and the buyer to dispose of his purchase in whatever market he may deem best for his own interest. The inspector's brand will then become an important factor in raising the standard of Canadian apples, and thereby increase their marketable value in any market to which they may chance to be sent.

We need not always discuss the question, how the big apples get on top and the little apples crawl into the middle of the barrel. I believe we have thousands of growers who do their packing as honestly and squarely as they measure their wheat, or any other product. The weak point is in not branding them according to quality. In some cases, why not ship cider apples, if there is a demand for them; but, by all means, let them be

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