



Picking Rhode Island Greenings, Beaver Valley, Georgian Bay Dist., Ont., Average, six barrels a tree

organization the average f.o.b. price netted is two dollars fifteen cents a box.

In this connection the question might be asked whether Canadian growers are not making a mistake in retaining the barrel as the chief package. It would seem that better prices can be obtained for boxed apples. At present the supply of boxed apples in the United States is not equal to the demand, while the inquiry for barrelled apples has been small.

One of the first difficulties met with in all cooperative societies is to find a way of paying each member a fair price for all fruit sold through the organization. All growers do not produce the same quality of fruit. Some are careless, some indifferent, while others are not content unless they raise really first-class stuff. If all sales are pooled the latter category of growers naturally suffer and do not receive the extra reward due to them.

The only way out of this difficulty is to have all fruit graded or packed at central receiving stations, and to pool sales of each grade separately, crediting each member with the number of packages of the particular grades delivered. This is a fair way out of the difficulty, and one that is not difficult to put into practise, as it merely entails the services at the central station of a receiver who is a good judge of fruit (in the case where the fruit is put up by the grower) and an efficient staff of packers for fruit put up in central stations.

In the case of berries of all kinds the number of grades should be strictly

limited to two: First-class berries and poor berries.

It is poor policy for any individual, and much more so for a large organization, to market poor quality stuff, and all berries which are not first-class should be sent to the canning factories. It will be found that the factories are prepared to contract with large cooperative societies at much better prices than with individuals, the reason for this being obvious: They can afford to give a better price, as they do not have to send round a lot of men touting for small contracts among growers. In no case should poor fruit be thrown on to the market, as it merely breaks the price and does not satisfy the consumer. The general Canadian public is wealthy enough and is prepared to pay a fair price for good fruit, but it does not require trash at any price.

As regards cherries, there is no particular difficulty in grading. They may be classed conveniently as Number One Sours, Sweets, and Number Two Sours, Sweets. Samples of the same variety will not be found to vary greatly from one orchard to another in the same season, although there may be a good deal of variation from one year to another.

It is when we come to apples or peaches that the real difficulties begin, since in the case of these fruits the differences in quality from one orchard to another are tremendous. Hard and fast rules as regards packing and grading must be made by each organization according to the market in which it is selling.

In the organization of an apple union the following are the chief points, as emphasized by an expert from the Hood River Valley, which are essential for success: The organization must be a large and powerful one in command of a wide acreage. This gives the society a large quantity of apples for sale and enables it to a certain extent to make its own price. It is advisable to sell the whole output to one man, or corporation. In putting up the apples, the packer is the judge and not the grower. Each packer must be registered, given a number, and made responsible for grade and pack. In no case must the packers have any interest in the orchards or in the sale of fruit.

In the Hood River Valley the packers are paid at the rate of thirty-five cents an hour, with board; or if they prefer it, at the rate of seven cents a box. This is a good wage, but a good class of labor is required, as the work is of a responsible nature. All members contract to sell the whole output of their orchard through the medium of the union, and every year they come in and sign a paper giving as close an estimate as possible of the expected return of each variety of fruit. Tenders for the purchase of the crop are invited on this estimate.

Every box of apples delivered by the Hood River Apple Growers' Union is guaranteed true to grade and all layers uniform with the top.

The foregoing simple principles, which have been strictly carried out, have made for the phenomenal success of the Hood River Union: and all fruit selling organizations which have not been equally successful should apply these principles in the future. It does not matter whether the fruit is apples, peaches, or otherwise. All fruit sold must be guaranteed true to grade and this cannot be done except in the manner outlined.

THE BEST METHODS

Any well managed organization will quickly discover which methods of grading and packing are the best suited to its particular requirements. At the same time it would be a step in advance for the fruit industry if all organizations could agree to a universal system of packing and grading.

There is one point on which Canadian growers and dealers in fruit seem to make a great mistake, and that is in over-estimating the value of large fruit. A large apple or a large peach has no better flavor than a medium-sized or even a small specimen. Yet in Canadian wholesale markets all peaches which do not attain a certain size are put out of the number one class. The same thing applies to apples in the manner in which they are packed by some of the Canadian organizations. Better prices would be obtained by the grower if less attention was paid to size and more to quality.