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A Report on the Spencer Seedless Apple

THE Spencer Seedless apple has invaded Canada. A company of prominent men in Toronto has been formed to promote the business. It is to be called the Spencer Seedless Apple Co., of Toronto. Among those gentlemen most interested are: Mr. J. T. Sheridan, president of the Pease Foundry Co., and Mr. A. G. Allan, of the White, Allan Co. At the request of the company, the Hon. John Dryden, until lately Minister of Agriculture for Ontario, visited Grand Junction, Col., which is said to be the home of the seedless apple. While there he investigated the merits of the apple. A full report of his observations, with conclusions, is here published.

While THE HORTICULTURIST knows that Mr. Dryden is sincere in his deductions, we feel that his investigations were not carried far enough to warrant such sweeping conclusions and, therefore, would advise fruit growers to be cautious in taking hold of this apple. It has been condemned by most fruit and nursery papers in the United States, and by many leading horticulturists, including Prof. John Craig, of Cornell, and Prof. Van Deman, former pomologist for the Department of Agriculture, Washington.

Questions concerning this apple that, as far as we know, have not been answered satisfactorily as yet, include the following:

Why have the various experiment stations in the United States and Canada never been given an opportunity to investigate and report on the quality of this fruit?

How has it been possible for the company back of the apple, in the short time since the apple has become known, to produce enough stock to enable it to supply 25,000 trees to the Canadian growers alone, to say nothing of the hundreds of thousands of trees that are being offered for sale at large prices in the United States and, we understand, in Great Britain also?

What guarantee will the growers who buy these trees have, that the stock they purchase are true to name and will the guarantee that, it is said, will be given, be a satisfactory one? It will be several

years before these trees will come into bearing and many things may happen in the interval. Further comments may be found in the editorial column in this issue.

MR. DRYDEN'S REPORT
SPENCER SEEDLESS APPLE CO., OF TORONTO, LIMITED,—

Gentlemen,—Pursuant to arrangement I proceeded to Grand Junction, Colorado, for the purpose of personally examining the trees and fruit of the Spencer Seedless apple. I arrived early in the afternoon of Tuesday, September 11, and immediately drove out about two miles to the farm of Mr. Spencer. Here, I saw altogether 27 trees in full bearing.

It is the Best!

I would like to express my appreciation of the great improvements you have made in THE CANADIAN HORTICULTURIST. It is the best fruit paper I get, and I have about all that are published on this continent, and several from England.
—Prof. F. C. Sears, Truro, N.S.

I was informed that the oldest trees were 12 years old, and the youngest in the orchard six years old. Twenty-six of these trees are planted in two rows, 13 in each, with other varieties of apples on either side. The additional tree stands alone, surrounded, also, by other varieties. I was informed that there were at least a dozen more trees scattered in different parts of the orchard. I spent some time in a close inspection of the growing trees, as well as the apple itself, with a view of determining what, in my judgment, would be its commercial value. It was a great pity I could not have delayed my visit until, say, the middle of October, when the fruit would have matured, showing its full size and natural color, but my return to Ireland at that time made it impossible to delay. The specimens I brought from Colorado show plenty of size, but are without a vestige of color. The top-most apples were just beginning to turn, and when mature, I am told, show a

beautiful red with small yellow spots, giving a very pretty appearance.

There are, in my opinion, several characteristics which are essential in the production of a commercial apple suited to the requirements of the average fruit grower. First, a hearty and vigorous grower, insuring maturity without waiting too long, as in the case of some varieties with which I am familiar. In this respect I found that the Spencer Seedless apple fulfils every requirement. The general appearance of the trees, the luxuriant leaves, the length of the young shoots, as well as the size of the trees which I examined, considering their age, all indicated a quick growing tree.

Secondly, will they do well in the Canadian climate? That has yet to be tested in practice, but their abundant success in Grand Junction, showing a hardy character in a climate ranging from 100 degrees of heat in July and August to 12 or more below zero in mid-winter, is an evidence that a similar result would be obtained in Canada.

The third essential is an early bearing quality. In this respect my visit leaves no doubt whatever. The first apple crop was given when these trees were four years old, and these were the only apples of that year produced in Mr. Spencer's orchard. A heavy frost on the night of April 17 destroyed everything else. The trees have continued to bear regularly ever since. This year, 1906, some of the young trees, being grown in a nursery in another state, and only about 15 inches high, carried some specimens of fruit until they were taken off in order that the growth of the trees should not be retarded. The entire experience with these apples show extremely early bearing tendencies.

My fourth essential characteristic is, will the Seedless apple tree bear a good crop and continue it year by year? From what I saw, as well as from repeated conversations with Mr. Spencer, I am satisfied as to this point also. Perhaps the answer which will appeal to the members of your company with the greatest force will be the appearance of the snap-shot photographs taken in the orchard as I was busy inspecting the