

mon winter varieties, such as the Baldwin, Spy, Russet and King, are ripe in District No. 1 early in October, and in the natural order of things are subjected to the warm, genial weather that prevails in this district during the latter part of October. At the end of three weeks of this warm weather the apples are in a condition of maturity, when they must go at once into consumption; that is to say, apple operators will not store these varieties, or, if owing to very favorable conditions of temperature, they do attempt to store them, the consequence is a very serious loss when they come to be repacked during the winter months. The growers, then, of winter stock in this district are forced to sell so as to go on the market at least before Christmas, and they have not the alternative of accepting this market or the later winter market.

#### CHEAP APPLES.

It might be noted just here that in the apple industry it is always likely that the cheapest apples will be those that must go into consumption during the months of October, November and December. During these months there will always be the fag ends of the high-priced early apples, as well as the odds and ends of the late winter varieties that for one reason or another have to be forced upon the market. These two sources of supply, together with the large volume of apples that ripen normally at this period, will always make a surplus at least of No. 2 grade at this time. Herein lies the reason for the low prices and for the want of market for the apples grown in district No. 1.

#### A NATURAL WINTER-APPLE REGION.

Somewhat different conditions prevail in the district which I have designated No. 2, including the second tier of counties on Lake Erie and the counties bordering on Lake Huron. This district, of course, fades imperceptibly into district No. 1 upon the south, but upon the whole is admirably fitted for growing the winter varieties. In common with district No. 3, it has that happy medium of climate not so severe as to induce winter-killing, and not so high in temperature as to prematurely ripen the apples. The standard winter varieties are matured normally so as to meet the temperature approaching the freezing point that prevails in these districts after the first of November. These apples go, as it were, into a natural cold storage, and, if harvested with care and placed at once where they will be protected from the occasional warm days, will be in the best condition to be repacked and shipped for the winter market.

#### FUTURE FOR EARLY APPLES.

What, then, should be the aim of the orchardist in the counties north of Lake Erie, District No. 1? One thing is certain, they can never compete under natural conditions with other portions of Ontario in the production of winter apples. It is very true that in this respect they have conditions not dissimilar to the orchardists in New York State, and they may make orcharding as successful in New York State by adopting the same devices as have been adopted there, namely, an extensive system of cold storage. If, at some point, or several points, in this district, cold-storage facilities are provided whereby the apples may be packed when they are matured (the last of September or the first of October) and placed in cold-storage chambers, where they will be quickly reduced to a temperature near the freezing point, they may, with confidence, then be repacked for the winter trade. Dismissing, however, the question of cold storage, the orchardists here should recognize the defects of their apples and market them early in the season. Indeed, though they have not clearly recognized the defects of their apples as keepers, all the apples that have been used have been sold for immediate consumption.

#### FIELD OF THE IRRESPONSIBLE BUYER.

As has already been pointed out, the market is not always a reliable or steady one, and consequently the more reputable dealers have avoided this district in their operations. It has been the prey, too frequently, of the irresponsible buyer, who has come in with his glib tongue and a light purse, and promised prices that induced the apple-grower to part with his fruit. The apples were packed and shipped, and if the price realized was a good one, or if the apple operator was so fixed that he could not get out of the district readily, he paid the farmer a part, or the whole, of what was promised. If, on the other hand, the markets were poor, if he made a clean breast of the matter and explained that the markets had gone wrong and he could not pay the promised price, the farmer very quickly realized that he had no recourse.

This, however, is not a necessary condition of affairs. It simply indicates bad business methods, and the remedy here is quite aside from any question of climate, soil, varieties or markets. The question is simply one of organization among the apple-growers themselves. This has been demonstrated by the success of one or two co-operative organizations which have been working

in this district. I need only to refer you to the success with which the Chatham Fruit-growers' Association is working. Another co-operative organization is working most successfully in Simcoe. Both of these organizations have this year sold all the apples their patrons had at prices much higher than the average prices paid for winter apples in the counties north of Lake Ontario. What has been done at Chatham and Simcoe can be done in Essex and Elgin and other counties constituting this district.

#### RAPIDLY-GROWING MARKET IN THE WEST.

Just here may be a convenient place to discuss the question of markets for early apples. The two most important markets for early apples are the Western Provinces and Great Britain. The markets of the Western Provinces are opening so rapidly that few who have not paid special attention to this matter will realize and appreciate the extraordinary growth of late years. The influx is not likely to lessen for many years, but the market for apples cannot be measured by this standard, large as it will be. The great cost of distributing the apples limits the consumption very largely to the cities and towns capable of taking at least carload lots. During the last few years there have been established along the railway lines of the Western Provinces hundreds of stations, none of which, until recently, were able to take the fruit in carload lots. Last year and this some dozens of these places have come into the market, accepting carload lots. A few years ago Winnipeg was the only distributing point. Now large distributing warehouses have been established at Regina, Prince Albert, Moose Jaw, Calgary, Lethbridge and Edmonton.

In consequence of this, an extraordinary demand for fruit has sprung up, quite out of proportion to the number of people entering the country last year and this. The comparative cheapness with which the fruit can now be distributed has increased the consumption among the people. The extraordinary prosperity of the Northwest has made it possible for almost everyone to enjoy fruit, which necessarily is high-priced even yet, compared with the price which is received by the grower. We can look forward, then, confidently, to a market there that will readily absorb a very large proportion of all the fruit that Ontario can grow. It is very true that the Ontario grower, in the near future, will have to meet the competition from the Province of British Columbia. This, however, he need not fear. The growers of each Province, when all the elements of success are taken into consideration, are upon a comparatively equal footing, and even if this were not the case, the market will likely increase much faster than the production of fruit in both Provinces.

#### WINNING OUR WAY IN BRITISH MARKET.

In addition to the Northwest, there is another growing market available for the Ontario grower, namely the market of Great Britain. It has formerly been an axiom of apple-growers that Canadian fruit would be acceptable in Great Britain only when there was a failure of the English and European crop. This conception of the British market is not a true one. For a number of years a large quantity of early fruit has gone from Canada to Great Britain, and prices have always been quite satisfactory, and there appears to be no good reason why this market should not continue and, in all probability, increase, even in the face of the competition with the apples of the home market. It is quite true that the Canadian apples will not compete with the best early fruit of Great Britain, but there are certain features of the business that are distinctly in favor of the Canadian growers. First, we have an admirable system of ocean transportation and a fair degree of efficiency in the railway transportation. If the early fruit is cooled properly before being packed, and then shipped in a refrigerator car, there is almost an absolute certainty of it reaching Great Britain in the best of order. The question, therefore, of losses in transshipment is reduced to a minimum. During the last two or three seasons the cargo inspectors at Montreal and at ports in Great Britain have very carefully reported upon the condition of the apples at the time of shipment and upon arrival in Great Britain, and in no case has there been a serious loss where it could be shown that the fruit was properly started from the orchards.

#### BENEFIT OF BIG SHIPMENTS.

In the British markets, the Ontario grower has upon his side the large brokers and fruit merchants. The Canadian apples reach the brokers and fruit merchants in uniform packages, uniformly graded, and in large quantities, compared with English fruit of one or two varieties. This element of uniformity in grading packages and variety will itself almost offset all the disadvantages that we have in the matter of transportation. It is easier for the fruit merchants to buy and distribute Canadian apples than it is to buy and distribute the home-grown fruit. The English orchards have the disadvantage of being planted with a great many different varieties, and no two portions of England put up their fruit in the same kind of packages. It is very difficult

for the dealer in Great Britain to get the same varieties or the same packages of home-grown fruit twice. This makes all transactions in English fruit a retail affair, and naturally the large sales all go to the Canadian or American product. As compared with the American apples, I quote from the latest number of an English market paper, The English Grocer, to show that Canadian apples have a preference of two shillings per barrel, which effectually protects them from any serious competition from States to the south of us.

Taking these two markets, then—the markets of the Western Provinces and the British markets—I see no reason why the present stock of apples should not be sold at good prices if proper means are taken to place them on the markets.

#### EARLY VARIETIES FOR ERIE COUNTIES.

One word more with reference to this southern division, No. 1. If, then, the market for early fruit is to be a growing one, I should strongly recommend that the growers confine themselves very largely to the early varieties. The Red Astrachan can be shipped from the County of Essex the third week in July, the Duchess the last of July and the first of August, the Wealthy, of course, somewhat later. Such varieties as these, therefore, should be selected, and this district should apply itself to supplying not only the Western Provinces, but our own city population in Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal and Quebec, with all the apples they need after the first of August, when we would entirely exclude the American product that now finds its way to our markets. It is unfortunate that the orchards of this district are devoted so largely to Baldwins, Spies and Russets and other winter varieties, inasmuch as these apples come in in the glut months of October and November. If the orchards were composed of the early varieties that I have mentioned the prices would be much higher than could be realized for the very best winter fruit in any part of Canada.

#### TOO MANY VARIETIES.

The conditions in District No. 2 are somewhat peculiar. Of course, there is no sharp line of demarcation between these districts, and the southern portions of Brant, Oxford and Middlesex may in some years be properly classed as part of District No. 1, but the greater portion of District 2, including the Counties of Lambton, Middlesex, Huron and Bruce, and part of Grey, has all the advantages for growing the very best winter varieties of apples. The planting, however, was done in the earlier days. In the selection of varieties there was the greatest latitude. No orchard was considered complete without a dozen or more varieties, which was all well enough for home market or for home use, but rendered the conditions very unfavorable for the commercial market. Every farm, too, had an orchard, very few of a large size, and very few making a specialty of apples; in fact, very few counted it more than a pure side line in their general farming operations. The result is that, though the small orchard predominates, yet the aggregate is a very large number of trees, probably not less than two and a quarter million.

The difficulty comes in in making sales. The large apple operator cannot, without extraordinary expense, harvest these apples profitably. He cannot send his gangs of men around more than once or twice at most, and yet these orchards would furnish almost continuous picking from the first of September until the close of the season. As a consequence, many of the apples are picked before they are ripe, or sometimes after they have reached maturity, and many of them are not picked at all, because they are not in the proper state of maturity at the time the gang visits the orchard. Though the aggregate, of course, is so large, the number of desirable varieties is probably not more than half the aggregate number.

#### NEED OF CO-OPERATION.

The recommendation which I would make for this district is co-operation in marketing and selling. There is no one who can pick these apples so cheaply or so well as the man who grows them, but he cannot pack them nor market them. He has not enough of any one kind to pay him to do this properly. It can be done, however, by uniting into co-operative associations which would furnish the packers and the facilities for selling. It is notable that two of the most successful societies in co-operative associations are in this district, namely Walkerton and Forest, and I cannot help thinking that a very slight encouragement would organize several more associations.

#### THE CENTRAL COUNTIES.

The central counties of Western Ontario, marked No. 4, call for some special comment. The altitude here, and consequently the climate, are adverse to the best conditions for apple-growing. Flesherton is fifteen hundred feet above the sea-level, nearly a thousand feet higher than Lake Huron, and twelve hundred feet higher than Lake Ontario. Nevertheless, there are many sheltered spots where the apples, even of tender varieties,