

The Harvesting and Marketing of Export Apples

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THE bulk of the apple crop of Ontario, except that in the hands of the cooperative associations, is now in the hands of the dealers or middlemen. As far as I have seen, the prices paid, if not in some cases, perhaps, as high as the demand should warrant, are such as should leave to the growers handsome profits for their labors.

In the principal apple-growing districts there are three methods of selling in practice: First, "lump" selling, a fixed price for all fruit on the trees; second, a fixed price per barrel for all fruit on trees; and third, a fixed price per barrel for selected fruit. The latter, although by far the most commendable, is practised the least.

The "lump" method is practised the most, which shows the strong desire on the part of the ordinary apple dealer to take a little shot at the game of chance and try to do the other fellow. The other fellow, or grower, too often gets the worst of it from the fact that his eye is not as practised as the dealers. The desire to gamble is not at all confined to the dealers. Many of the growers delight in a little gamble and, if they are bitten, say nothing about it.

The other method of selling at a price per barrel for all the product of the tree, including windfalls in many cases, is the safer one for the farmer, inasmuch as there is no gamble in the deal, and everything goes in the barrel. It is wonderful how carefully everything in the shape of fruit is taken from the trees and ground. I know, however, of a few exceptions to the rule, where men of public spirit will not allow rubbish to leave their orchards to be placed on the market.

These two methods of selling have little to recommend them. In the first place, they are not based on business principles, and the business man who desires to handle fruit, if he waits until he can see what he is buying, is left waiting and consequently is out of business. In the second place, by these methods, thousands of barrels of culls find their way into the fruit houses to be exported later, thousands of barrels of "stuff" that should never be placed on the market, except perhaps as a by-product. Shipping this kind of rubbish is sure to injure the trade, but there is a little consolation in the fact that the trade does not suffer now as much as in the days when the culls were sandwiched between two good "faces."

A WARNING TO GROWERS AND DEALERS

Passing to another phase of the situation, I may say that, while the grower seems to be safe, having sold for a good

price, while the dealer feels that he is safe, from the fact that already he can turn over his "pack" at a handsome profit, and while from every indication this promises to be a good year for the apple man; yet, I would warn all concerned there is a possible chance for many a slip between now and March, 1908.

ESSENTIALS TO SUCCESS

There are three great factors that figure in the success or failure of the season's operations. The first is the

barrels of our fruit go forward, either picked nearly a month too soon or, on the other hand, nearly a month too late. I have examined barrels of apples of the standard varieties, when one would be puzzled indeed to name the variety, unless guided by the name on the package. Such early picked apples have neither color nor flavor. The dealer who sells the Englishman a barrel of such fruit, is giving him a barrel of Canadian "Spys" or "Baldwins" in name only,



Picking Peaches in the Niagara District—Note the Well-Constructed Ladders

picking and packing; second, the weather conditions; and third, the transportation facilities. The first essential is a neat, strong package and the securing of good, experienced men to do the work. In my capacity of a Dominion Fruit Inspector, I have seen so many "packs" that I think I am able to say: "Show me the packages and the workmanship of a 'pack' and I will tell you whether the operator will make money in the apple business or not."

The next essential is to pick the fruit in season. I wish to draw special attention to the fact that thousands of

and is not taking the best way to secure him as a steady customer.

A large percentage of our fruit remains on the trees too late in the season. It is true such fruit has color and flavor, but at the expense of being more or less damaged by frost or wind storms. A large percentage of our apples were frosted on the trees last season, which had a great deal to do with its poor keeping qualities at the close of season.

INFLUENCE OF WEATHER CONDITIONS

The heating of fruit packed in barrels in warm weather, has more to do with the bad condition in which our fruit