

The Farmer's Advocate

and Home Magazine

"Persevere and Succeed."

Established
1866.

VOL. XLI.

REGISTERED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COPYRIGHT ACT OF 1875.
LONDON, ONT., OCTOBER 11, 1906.

No. 739

EDITORIAL.

The Ontario Apple Trade.

We are pleased to note that some of the Toronto newspapers are awakening their readers to more than a dessert-and-pie interest in the Ontario apple crop. One of them suggests that the Dominion Minister of Agriculture should belt the Province with cold-storage warehouses, so that the waste of millions of bushels of fruit might be saved and the trade put upon another basis; and another figures that the apple is the fulcrum on which the farm mortgages will all be lifted and the farmer and his family sent on an annual tour to Europe. It is very true that, with an area of some 228,000 acres in apple orchards, there should be a vastly greater financial return, but those familiar with the real situation know that thousands of the older orchards are composed of a hopeless mixture of mostly early varieties, many of which are all but worthless and should be cut down or else top-grafted, while for want of proper cultivation, fertilizing, spraying and pruning, another large slice must be written off the apple account. A great many of this class would certainly fall into the millions of bushels which Saturday Night estimates were fed to hogs or rotted on the ground after being frozen. Then, we must not forget that increasing quantities are home-consumed, canned, dried and pulped.

Admittedly, the situation is bad enough, as the columns of "The Farmer's Advocate" for years past will verify; but, on the one hand, it is not quite as hopeless as one might imagine, nor, on the other, quite as easily remedied by the sweep of some magic wand. The educational campaign which has been going on for some years in favor of improved cultural methods, is having its effect, and the fruit-growers' co-operative organizations have been quietly but steadily solving the problem of the profitable disposal of the crop where it is worth while. Those who have been perusing the reports which we have been publishing, showing how these bodies, composed of practical business farmers, are disposing of their apple crops, know that a revolution is really going on in the sale of early fall fruit. The report of the operations of the Chatham Fruit-growers' Association, in "The Farmer's Advocate" for Sept. 20th, is a case in point, and our report of the St. Catharines Cold Storage and Forwarding Co. in this issue shows how successfully the smaller and finer fruits, as well as apples, can be disposed of in Canada to the advantage both of producers and consumers. We have very much more faith in enterprises of this kind, conducted by people in the business, than by launching a lot of experimental Government cold-storage houses in which farmers might hold their crop. As a matter of fact, we believe that the more rapidly the salable early apples are disposed of the better, so that they will be out of the way of the main crop of winter fruit.

The Fruit Division of the Dominion Department of Agriculture is rendering the industry very valuable service in aiding the organization of co-operative associations in the circulation of information re the trade, etc., particularly in connection with cold-storage temperatures, packing and shipping; and the Railway Commission is doing good service in compelling railway and express companies to furnish an efficient service at reasonable rates.

It sounds all very well to say the Ontario farmer might hold his apples in cold storage till winter and then sell when prices are high, but there are contingencies to consider. In shipping to Manitoba and the Northwest, and even to

points in Eastern Canada or England, frost must be reckoned with after cold weather sets in, and, under present conditions in many orchards, and sometimes in whole neighborhoods, the supply of really marketable apples is small and uncertain, but as the reformation in the system of orchard management now in progress is worked out, and farmers and those who make fruit-growing a specialty develop the co-operative system in reaching the consumer, eliminating many of the speculative intermediaries who eat up the profits, we shall find the business getting upon a sounder and more satisfactory basis. Shipment to the Old Country requires a great deal of careful oversight, from the orchard, through the local warehouse, on the trains, at Montreal, on shipboard, and then again at Liverpool or other English ports, and in this process vigilant Government officers may render valuable service. Getting in close touch with the English consumer is a slow process, owing to the conservatism of the trade there. For example, it suits the Liverpool Board to have as much of the trade as possible concentrated through that channel, but that does not make it best for the Canadian apple producer or the English consumer. There is an enormous and almost insatiable market in England for Canadian fruit, and it is well worth while overcoming the difficulties so as to allow the Canadian fruit-grower a fair profit, but the experience of our co-operative fruit-growers' associations proves that there is also in Canada a rapidly-growing and appreciative home market equally worth cultivating.

Improving the Fairs.

Fair visitors have various preferences which lead them to manifest special interest in one or more departments of the show—some in the horses, some in cattle or other classes of live stock, some in machinery or processes of manufacturing, and so on throughout the list of exhibits. With the exception of the live stock, the whole show can usually be seen to advantage at any hour of the day, visitors being privileged to view the exhibits at leisure when it suits their convenience. In the case of live stock the conditions are different, the animals, for the most part, being confined in narrow stalls and kept covered for protection from flies and for other reasons, so that, except while in the judging ring for half an hour, or an hour at most, on one day during the fair, visitors have scarcely any opportunity of seeing them at their best. It is true that in a few of the larger exhibitions a programme of the judging hours of each day in the live stock classes is published, to a limited extent, and followed as nearly as circumstances permit, but where many classes are necessarily judged on the same day and in the same hours, one who feels interested in more than one class cannot follow the judging in all, and thus loses much of the benefit the show is intended to convey. For this reason, the need, in connection with the principal or Provincial exhibitions, of a large judging arena, with covered seating accommodation, where visitors may witness the judging in several classes at the same time, is emphasized. This improvement has been adopted by the management of some of the State fairs in the neighboring country, to the great satisfaction of exhibitors and the visiting public; and, considering the paramount importance of the live-stock industry, and the general interest taken in this department—certainly the most attractive to the greatest number of practical people—there is urgent need for this provision in connection with, at least, the great show at Toronto, which

claims, with some good reason, the appellation of National.

Toronto has set a good example in the matter of publishing an official catalogue of the entries in live stock and of posting the awards by means of numbers in the judging-ring when they are placed, so that onlookers may follow the proceedings intelligently in the light of the descriptive catalogue. What is needed to make this part of the show more complete is the early publication of the list of awards and its circulation on the grounds, if possible, on the day after the conclusion of the judging, as is done by the management of the Royal Show in England. The Winnipeg exhibition and the Ontario Provincial Winter Fair have followed suit satisfactorily in the matter of a catalogue, and it is not creditable to the management of some others of our more pretentious exhibitions that they have not made advancement in this particular. Much more could also be made of the stock exhibit by means of well-conducted and systematic daily parades of the horses and cattle, which constitute one of the most pleasing and interesting features of such an exhibition, as was well illustrated at the Buffalo, St. Louis and Portland International events, and which is one of the most prominent and attractive features of the Royal Show of England, where it is carried out with almost perfect precision, every animal in the horse and cattle classes that has received a prize or commendation being required in the procession, under penalty of forfeiture if absent for any cause other than sickness.

There is also room for much improvement in the arrangement of the stabling at the leading shows, by which visitors may, with comfort and cleanliness, view the animals in their stalls. Even the Toronto buildings are very faulty in this respect, the passages being unfit for use by ladies, whose skirts are liable at any time to be soiled in the attempt to see a section of the show in which many of them are interested, and which they would gladly take in were proper provision made for their comfort. There should be a clean passage provided between the rows of cattle, with a low railing to prevent unnecessary disturbance of the animals, as in the Ottawa fair cattle barns, which are the most comfortable and sanitary in any Canadian exhibition we have seen.

The practical demonstrations in the dairy and other manufacturing processes introduced in the leading exhibitions in the last few years have proved very attractive features, giving much pleasure and satisfaction to the visiting public, while, we believe, proving profitable as an advertising medium to those interested in the manufacture of the machinery and the sale of the product involved.

As regards the special attractions of an entertaining character, which appeal to a large proportion of the people as a necessary accompaniment of the practical, in order to securing gate receipts sufficient to make the show pay its way, it is gratifying to know that the character of these has been greatly improved, and that in the last year or two there has been little to complain of, public sentiment having endorsed the demand for clean shows, which are now the rule. The township, county and district shows, as well as the larger exhibitions, have this year enjoyed more than average success, thanks to favorable weather, a prosperous season and improved management, all of which should encourage the effort to register advancement from year to year.

There are great possibilities in the Ontario apple crop, but it is hardly in it yet with the bacon hog and dairy cow as a mortgage-lifter.