Fruit Growing.

Fruit growing is one of the infant industries of British Columbia, but it is growing rapidly and is quite certain ere many years to rival mining, lumbering, or fishing.

The southern portion of this province is now acknowledged to be the finest fruit country in Canada, the fruit being equal in quality to any grown in America.

A trial shipment of apples was sent to Great Britain in 1903 and aroused much interest amongst fruit dealers and consumers. Every year since then large collections have been sent and shown at all the leading exhibitions and horticultural shows, and in all cases the exhibits have been carrying off high honors.

In a letter accompanying his report Thomas Cunningham, provincial inspector of fruit pests, says: "The present value of the orchards of British Columbia has reached the enormous sum of fifteen million dollars, and they are increasing in value at the rate of not less than 25 per cent. annually. It is quite safe to estimate the value of these orchards five years hence at thirty million dollars."

The setting out of an orchard.

The setting out and care of an orchard until it becomes a source of profit requires considerable outlay of cash and personal exertion, but the results after a few years furnish ample compensation. Root crops and small fruits planted between the trees for the first year or two, and red clover up to the fifth year should more than pay for the trees; but many fruit growers deprecate this practice, prefering to devote the whole strength of the soil to the young trees. The fourth year trees should produce some fruit.

The cost.

The cost of setting out 20 acres of apple trees in British Columbia is about as follows: 20 acres (irrigated), at $250 per acre $5,000 00 Fencing $200 00 Preparing land $150 00 Trees (968), at 25 cents each $242 00 Freight, etc. $30 56 Setting out trees, at 8 cents each $77 44 Total $5,700 00. The cost of maintenance for five years, with the original cost and interest, would amount to $10,000 00, less the value of fruit produced. In the 6th year the orchard should produce $2,000 00 worth of fruit, in the 7th $3,200 00, and in the 9th $5,800 00, after which it should pay a net annual profit of $125 to $150 per acre—an assured income of $2,500 to $3,000 a year.

Actual results.

As to actual results, here are the figures furnished by a grower whose bearing orchard of 17 acres was planted, 13 acres in 1895 and 4 acres in 1899. Fruit produced, sold at packing house unpacked, 1899 $329 - 1900 $560 - 1991 $2,088 - 1902 $1,702 - 1903 (140 tons) $3 809 - 1904 (130 tons) $3,915 - 1905 (174 tons) $5 544 - 1906 (175 tons) $5 375.

1.3 acres of d'Anjon pears produced in 1905 — 17 tons of fruit, or 884 boxes. The selling price of this fruit packed f. o. b. was $1,239 20 In 1906 these same trees produced 19 tons 955 lbs of marketable fruit equal to 1,025 boxes, realizing $1 435.

Two and half acres of Italian prunes, produced in 1905, 32 tons, equivalent to 2,909 boxes at 60 cents per box—$1,705.40. Instances can be given where 20 acres have produced $10 000 worth of Northern Spy Apples, and Tomatoes to the value of $1 500 per acre.

The prolific yield of the soil is instanced by one cherry tree producing 800 pounds and another tree actually yielded 1000 pounds of luscious fruit.

The actual experience of most fruit growers has been very satisfactory and act as a lode-stone to many to start up a like industry for themselves.