

standing between the buyer and the grower. It not infrequently happens that the buyer will set a very high standard for his No. 1's and 2's, with the result that the grower finds himself with a large number of culls on hand, and comparatively few No. 1's and No. 2's. Usually these culls, no matter how good they may be, find a very poor market, if they are not entirely wasted. The presumption is, of course, that these extra grades are shipped by the buyer to special customers, where they realize a price much above the average.

On the other hand, the buyers are often deceived by their own workmen. These workmen may be personal friends of the grower or the grower may, and often does, cajole the workman having charge of the packing to put in a poorer quality of fruit than the grade calls for. The buyer having confidence in his men frequently ships these without inspection, and suffers the consequence in having to make a rebate to his customer or it may be to pay a fine under the Inspection and Sale Act. If the grower wishes to sell by the barrel the more satisfactory way is for him to offer the apples for sale in barrels graded by himself.

The fourth method most in vogue in Ontario, has little to recommend it. The buyer is of necessity better informed than the grower to estimate the quantity of fruit on the trees, because his faculties have been sharpened by years of experience in buying orchards of different varieties and at different times. The grower, therefore, is not on equal terms with the buyer.

Unfortunately, there is no profitable outlet, as the trade is at present organized, for low grade apples, and the temptation to work off as many as possible of these in 'lump' bought orchards is often too strong to be resisted. The Dominion Fruit Inspectors now regard the fact that apples were packed in a 'lump' bought orchard as sufficient reason for examining them, and experience shows that there is an abnormal number of fraudulently packed apples from this source.

SELLING THROUGH COMMISSION AGENTS.

The selling methods so far considered have all presumed that the fruit was sold to a buyer who came to the fruit growers. Ontario apples are sold almost exclusively in this way. There are a few, however, especially of the larger growers, who consign their fruit to commission merchants in distant cities. In Nova Scotia it has been much more common for individual growers to consign on commission. A small army of agents could always be found there, most of them representing English commission merchants. Selling on commission has proved a most unsatisfactory way of disposing of the fruit crop, but until co-operative organization is much more complete than it is at the present time, selling on commission will be a necessary evil.

The perishable nature of fruit and the uncertainty in the quality and quantity of it until it is packed for market, makes it very difficult for individual growers to sell except by consignment. Consigning fruit is a necessary evil as the fruit trade is now organized. One of the objects of co-operation is to do away to as great an extent as possible with this method of selling. It is perfectly true that there are many reputable commission merchants whose record for fair dealing is unimpeachable, but it is absolutely impossible for the individual fruit grower to determine whether or not he has been fairly dealt with. He cannot audit the accounts nor follow his fruit to the consumer, and practically he is obliged to take the word of the commission man for all facts connected with the sale of his fruit. He simply places the fruit in the hands of his commission agent unconditionally, and it would be strange indeed if some commission men did not yield to the temptation and send returns below those received for the fruit.

It is not a question of the financial standing of the commission merchant. His standing may be high, but if he wishes to be dishonest he need not want for a plausible excuse to return almost any sum to the grower.