



Hon. Martin Burrill, Dominion Minister of Agriculture

Being a practical fruit grower, Hon. Mr. Burrill is much interested in the fruit industry. During the three years he has been Minister of Agriculture, he has held two Dominion conferences of fruit growers. He attended and spoke briefly at the conference held at Grimsby, Ont.

a serious situation due to the fact that the steamship companies carrying the bulk of the Nova Scotia apple pack from Halifax to the Old Country had given notice of a proposed advance in carrying charges of 32c. a barrel. As a reason for this they had mentioned additional war risks. At the time the advance was announced it was known that the additional charges due to the war risks would not amount to more than 15c. a barrel. The steamship companies were evidently endeavoring to take advantage of the situation to impose an additional burden on the fruit growers. There was reason to believe also that the advance had been contemplated before war was declared. In view of the fact that the Government subsidized these steamship companies heavily Nova Scotia fruit growers felt that the Government should take action to prevent such a large increase in rates. Mr. McMahon appealed to the conference to assist the Nova Scotia fruit growers in obtaining a satisfactory adjustment.

At first, as the Nova Scotia growers explained the situation, the growers from the other provinces listened with interest, but without showing any tendency to give special support to the Nova Scotia growers in dealing with the situation. They were ready to do what they could to help, but seemed to look on it as a Nova Scotia matter which the Nova Scotia growers should deal with themselves. A sudden and remarkable change in this attitude was brought about when one of the Nova Scotia delegates pointed out that the situation was one which affected the other provinces fully as much as it did Nova Scotia, because unless a considerable reduction was obtained in the proposed advance in the steamship rates it would practically prevent the shipment of certain varieties of Nova Scotia apples now shipped to European markets. Being unable to market these apples in Britain, Nova Scotia growers would be forced to unload them on the markets of Ontario and the west at low prices, where they would compete

with the products of the other provinces.

This point scored a bull's eye. Within a few minutes it was decided to have a delegation wait on the Government at Ottawa. Ontario and British Columbia quickly agreed to stand the expense of being represented on that delegation in order to prove to the Government that it was a matter of national importance. The delegation was duly appointed and waited on the Government on the following Saturday. The Canadian Horticulturist has since been looking into the matter. Partly as a with an encouraging reception. At the request of the United Fruit Companies of Nova Scotia the Government had already been looking into the matter. Partly as a result of the work of Sir Geo. E. Foster, and partly on account of the fact that the United Fruit Companies had commenced to charter boats independent of the combine, the growers have obtained a reduction in the proposed advance of not less than 19c. a barrel, and are satisfied with the new arrangement.

The incident brought home to all present the solidarity of interests between the fruit growers in all parts of Canada, and seemed to indicate the possibility that within a few years the fruit growers in the different provinces will be cooperating in the marketing of their crops. During the discussion Mr. A. W. Peart pointed out that cold storage charges on shipments of fruit had been greatly increased this year as compared with last year. Mr. Ruddick stated that one of the chief difficulties this year is going to be to get any space at all on vessels, as many of the steamships will be required to be used as transports, and may not be available to handle apples when most needed. About twenty vessels would be required to transport the troops at Valcartier alone. The Nova Scotia delegates did not seem to think that there would be much difficulty in their obtaining all the accommodation necessary. Their chief concern was to prevent the proposed advance in rate.

THURSDAY'S SESSIONS

According to the programme, Thursday morning was to be devoted to an automobile ride through the Niagara district. The drive lasted, however, until six o'clock. Most of the automobiles were loaned by local fruit growers. The delegates were taken from Grimsby to the Fruit Experiment Station at Jordan Harbor, and from there to St. Catharines and Niagara Falls, where dinner was served. The drive took the delegates through some of the best fruit sections of the Niagara district.

SUCCESSFUL COOPERATION

At the Thursday evening conference, Mr. A. E. Adams, the secretary of the United Fruit Companies Ltd. of Nova Scotia gave a most instructive address entitled, "Systematic Cooperation in Nova Scotia." Mr. Adams traced the initial efforts of the fruit growers of Nova Scotia to cooperate, their failures and successes. He told of the Acts that it was necessary for them to get passed through their local Legislature in order that they might cooperate effectively, and concluded by describing the wonderful success that has been attained. Last year the United Companies handled 6,044 tons of fertilizers or over 300 car loads, saving at least \$18,000 to their members on fertilizers alone. In addition they handled 575,000 pulp heads, 35,000 pounds of nails, 67,600 pounds of grass and clover seed, 104,000 pounds of arsenate of lead, 8,900 rods of wire fencing and 1,800 barrels of lime-sulphur, as well as handling many other articles of a similar nature. Last year the companies

did a fire insurance business, exceeding \$450,000. Extracts from this paper will be published in The Canadian Horticulturist as space permits. In reply to questions, Mr. Adams stated that the Companies do not sell to middlemen, nor to private individuals. Their sales are made to the local affiliated companies. Where sales are made to outsiders the companies make a profit on each transaction and the outsiders do not participate in the rebate given to members.

FRIDAY'S SESSIONS

Three busy sessions were held on Friday. These were devoted mainly to discussions of the Inspection and Sales Act and to the standardization of packages. Mr. Robt Thompson of St. Catharines was the chairman of the committee appointed to deal with standard packages. This committee reported that they had decided after thorough discussion not to recommend any changes in the present standard barrels or boxes. The six-quart and eleven-quart baskets were also looked on as standard. It was felt that it was not desirable that there should be any change here, also except that the style of basket used might be standardized as at present some of the manufacturers were making baskets that, while they contained the same amount of fruit, were made in different shapes.

Senator E. D. Smith said that previous to 1900 there was no standard size of basket. The twelve-quart basket was commonly used. Gradually growers began to shave off half an inch in the length or width or depth of the basket, while still calling it a twelve-quart basket. This continued until the so-called twelve-quart basket contained only nine quarts. Berry boxes were not touched for a long time, but finally the growers began to tamper with them. When standards were set and the fruit division was given power to deal with the matter an improvement in conditions became noticeable.

Fruit Commissioner Johnson wanted to know if the committee did not deem it advisable to require that the baskets should be made of a certain thickness of veneer to ensure their being made of good material.

Mr. Thompson replied that this did not seem practical, as thick veneer made of poor material often was not as strong as veneer, that while thinner was made of better material.

Senator Smith agreed with this contention.

Commissioner Johnson suggested that the law might require that the material used should be of good quality.

THE STANDARD BOX

A discussion was held as to whether or not it is advisable to discard the Canadian standard apple box in favor of the standard box recently adopted by the United States. The discussion soon showed that the British Columbia growers, who have had the most experience in box packing were seriously divided on this point. Aside from some of the western growers, however, the opinion of the western dealers present and others who spoke seemed to be favorable to adopting the American standard box as the Canadian standard. The Canadian standard is 10x11x20. The American standard is 10½x11½x18. It was said that while the American box is twenty odd inches smaller than the Canadian box, it is a little squarer and gives the public the impression that it is larger and holds more. It therefore sells better. It also holds better in the car and loads itself better to certain packs.