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Great Possibilities of Ontario Apple Orchards

THERE are neglected orchards on thousands of farms in Ontario, the owners of which have no conception of their value. These orchards range in size from one to twenty acres. Many of them are stocked with excellent varieties of trees. For the most part they are unpruned, unsprayed, uncultivated. Did their owners realize the returns that might be obtained from their orchards they would be quick to give them the slight care and attention that is all that is required to make their value apparent. As it is they do not appreciate their possibilities and consequently most of these orchards could be purchased for only a few dollars an acre. Money invested in some of these orchards, with a little care and attention might soon be doubled.

The best of these orchards are located in the counties adjoining the great lakes. There are hundreds of them in the county of Prince Edward which is exceptionally well adapted for the growing of fruit. Others may be found in counties all along the shores of Lake Ontario, Lake Erie, Lake Huron, and the Georgian Bay, as well as in some counties situated further inland.

There are sections where an awakening has taken place. For the most part these are where co-operative fruit growers' associations have been formed, as at Trenton, Newcastle, Oshawa, Simcoe, Chatham, Forest, Walkerton, Meaford, and elsewhere. In some of these districts there are fruit growers who now are making \$100 and \$200 an acre and more out of apple orchards that a few years ago they were planning to destroy.

REASONS FOR NEGLECT

Most of these neglected orchards were planted many years ago. They proved profitable for some years. Later, however, their output became greater than the local markets could absorb. At that time the great markets in Western Canada had not been created, and the population of the towns and cities of Ontario was much smaller than it is now. The co-operative handling of fruit was practically unknown. The growers were forced to sell their crops to apple buyers. If they obtained 75cts. to \$1.00 a bbl. they generally considered that they did well. These conditions proved discouraging. In the course of a few years thousands of these orchards

were neglected. Most of them are still in that condition.

CHANGED CONDITIONS

Within the past five or six years the general situation has changed completely. Over 1,000,000 settlers have come into Canada. Important consuming centres have sprung up all over the great West, and lately in Northern Ontario, as though by magic. The population of the cities and towns has increased greatly. Together with this the co-operative system of handling the apple crop has been introduced, and has been proved to be practical and profitable. About forty co-operative apple growers' associations now save for their members the

A Bond of Union

It is well for the horticultural interests of Canada that we have such a publication as THE CANADIAN HORTICULTURIST. It is the bond that unites those interested in horticulture all over the Dominion, and thus it is a factor in building up Canada. We should all support it.—Thos. Delworth, Weston, Ont., President, Ontario Vegetable Growers' Association.

proceeds from their fruit that formerly were divided among two or three middlemen. By means of their warehouses they are able to store their apples, and thus to sell them when the market is the most favorable. Thus to-day there are many hundreds of apple growers in Ontario who receive two and three dollars a barrel for their apples, and who thus are making large profits out of their orchards. And still there are thousands of farmers in the province who do not realize what the changes that have taken place mean to them, and whose orchards in consequence are an eyesore to them, and even in some cases a source of loss.

THE GEORGIAN BAY DISTRICT

The Georgian Bay district is one in which hundreds of neglected orchards exist. In Nottawasaga township, Simcoe county, however, such an awakening is taking place as is needed in the other fruit sections of the province. There is a prospect that within the next few years it will become general throughout Ontario.

The section is well adapted to the growth of apple trees and many of the semi-hardy fruit trees. The so-called mountains—a high ridge of land running along the shore near the Bay, which is a continuation of the Niagara escarpment—together with the tempering influence of the Georgian Bay to the north, renders the climate of the district most favorable for fruit. Fruit trees do remarkably well, and so far as apple trees are concerned, it would be difficult to find a place that by nature was better adapted for their growth.

START OF THE MOVEMENT

Last year, the Fruit Branch of the Ontario Department of Agriculture interested itself in the district. During the summer, considerable data relative to the actual conditions of the orchards was gathered.

There is located at Collingwood one of the Branch Offices of the Ontario Department of Agriculture. Its representative, I. F. Metcalf, B.S.A., realized that the farmers of the section did not appreciate their opportunities. Acting on his knowledge of the district, along with that obtained from the orchard survey work, he planned to conduct some demonstration orchards this year in the hope of improving the orchards generally. His efforts are meeting with distinct success.

The start was made last spring in the township of Nottawasaga. Six orchards that were in a badly neglected state were selected at favorable points. Having gained the consent of their owners, these were taken over by the Department for a period of two years to be used for demonstration purposes. The orchards are located on the farms of the following men: W. Hamilton, Collingwood; W. J. Ovens, Duntroon; C. Campbell, Stayner; R. Steele, Cashtown; S. Blackburn, Creemore; John Osborne, Dunedin. These orchards are representative of orchards in the district. The trees were pruned, scraped, and sprayed. All of these orchards had previously been in sod, as are most of the orchards in the district. They were plowed and have since been cultivated.

The owners of the orchards assisted with the work of pruning and spraying, and did the manuring, plowing, and cultivating, as directed. The farmers who owned the orchards will reap the full