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FARM AND DAIRY

& RURAL HOME



The Recognized Exponent of Drivings in Canada.

Trade increases the wealth and glory of a country; but its real strength and stamina are to be looked for among the cultivators of the land — Lord Chatham.

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Have Apples Been too Extensively Planted*

A Survey of the Situation from Coast to Coast by D. Johnson,
Dominion Fruit Commissioner

OVER three years ago I addressed the Ontario Fruit Growers' Association on the future of the apple industry in Canada. At that time I told them to go on planting more and more orchards, because the development of the country was such that there would be a constant and strong demand for many years to come.

I have travelled over all the fruit-producing districts of Canada during the past six months, and have been amazed at the huge plantings which exist. I knew before that Canada had some 25,000,000 fruit trees, but had never realized what these figures meant until I came in contact with the orchards, and it was pressed home to me that there was a day not far distant when Canada would be faced with over-production.

In the famous Annapolis Valley of Nova Scotia not more than 50 per cent. of the apple trees are bearing, and those that are bearing are still young and far from yielding their maximum amount of fruit. In this valley apples are the main product of the land, and the good care that the growers are giving their trees assures us that Nova Scotia will yet produce twice as much and perhaps four times as much before many years. New Brunswick is also planting, and on the sloping bank of the St. John River are thousands of acres of young orchards that are not yet producing. Quebec is also forging to the front once more, and many acres of Fameuse and McIntosh Reds are there found producing an apple of superb quality and appearance.

Conditions in Ontario

With conditions in Ontario we are all more or less familiar. We know that in some districts, such as this, the plantings have greatly increased, while in others San Jose Scale has wiped the orchards out of existence. Nevertheless, the fact remains that one-half of our 10,000,000 apple trees are not yet bearing. It is only necessary to drive up and down the concessions north of Lake Ontario and Lake Erie and east of Lake Huron to be convinced that the orchards are just beginning to produce.

British Columbia was a great surprise to me. I had often heard of the orchards there, but when brought face

*An address by Fruit Commissioner Johnson to his own people down in Lambton Co. Ont.

to face with the conditions obtaining in that province it was a revelation. I travelled hour by hour through solid orchards, kept in a state of perfection seldom seen in Ontario. It is true that they are producing only some 1,000 carloads of apples this season, yet it is only the beginning, as two-thirds of the trees are under five years of age and the other third practically only beginning to bear. The north-west States of Washington, Oregon and Idaho are in a like position, producing now some 15,000 cars. In view of these facts, I can only ask you, as I have asked myself time after time, "What of the future?"

Enough Trees Planted

I do not wish to throw cold water on the fruit-growing industry, but I do think it is time for us to take stock of the future and see where we stand. I am of the opinion that unless we can greatly increase consumption, there are enough fruit trees planted in Canada to supply its needs for many years to come. Let us take care of the trees we have, produce the finest grade we can, and I believe there is a fair return assured under normal conditions.

I know that some will not agree with me; that they will say I am discouraging orchard-land booms and depressing the price of land. When out west this summer I inquired the price of a certain piece of orchard land and was told in a most discouraged tone that it would be hard to get much over \$1,000 per acre for it now, but that a few years ago it was sold at \$2,500 per



Mr. D. Johnson, Dominion Fruit Commissioner. In the article adjoining Mr. Johnson discusses present conditions in the fruit industry. After reviewing conditions from coast to coast, he believes that "go slow" is a good rule to govern growers in their future planting.

acre. In Lambton it would not have sold for more than \$100 per acre.

Lambton has been mercifully spared from the blighting effects of orchard land booms. I have met hundreds of people who have been induced to buy orchard lands, such as we have here, at a valuation ten times as great as we ask. Such booms can only have one effect, and that is one of serious loss and discouragement. I trust that such a catastrophe will never fall to the lot of our country, but that fair and full valuation will always be placed upon orchard lands in this district.

It may be said that we have many thousands of acres yet unplanted. My advice is to curtail planting until such time as the consumption of fruit increases to meet the plantings of the present day. If we are going to have two or three times as much fruit in the next ten or fifteen years as we have at the present time, it is going to take no prophet to tell the final outcome. This year we find thousands of barrels of apples wasting in our orchards. This, of course, was caused by the abnormal conditions, which have never existed before.

The argument is often advanced that 50 per cent. of the



Young Orchards Splendidly Tilled, Are Characteristic in British Columbia.

Are we facing overproduction of fruit in Canada? Statistics would seem to verify this claim of many growers. Of the splendidly tilled orchards of British Columbia, for instance, two-thirds are under five years of age and the greater proportion of the remainder are only beginning to bear. This orchard scene in the Okanagan Valley is characteristic of all of British Columbia's fruit areas. Heavy planting, too, has been the rule in Eastern Canada.