

with inferior fruit as can be done in a barrel. I am sorry to report that Ontario packers have won an unenviable reputation for the way the centres of the barrels are filled with apples below the general grade of the barrel. Last year many carloads sold for No. 1 apples were not up to grade, some of them being put down as low as No. 3. This does not make for repeat orders.

There is no doubt that more fruit would be consumed were the people able to buy it at lower prices. The freight haul has something to do with the high price, but the large profit asked by dealers in the West has also a good deal to do with the lack of demand. When it is remembered that this profit is taken on the freight as well as the actual cost of the apples, it is readily understood how rapidly the price goes up.

From statistics gathered at the larger centres it would appear that Alberta purchased about 1,200 cars of apples during the year 1914, a division would show as to where the cars came from in about the following proportions: Ontario 180 cars; United States, 120 cars, and British Columbia, 900 cars.

The Western people are liberal buyers and would spend freely for apples were prices such as to justify them. Could the consumer buy Ontario apples at \$4.00 per barrel or less, I think I am safe in saying that double the quantity now used would be required. Just what is a reasonable price is very difficult to arrive at. What the consumer would consider a reasonable price the dealer always endeavors to show would leave him no profit at all.

I do not know sufficient about the trade and the charges that ought to be fairly met at each step from the producer to the consumer to determine what would be a reasonable price. At present prices in Ontario, and existing freight rates, the lowest price to the consumer here is bound to be high—too high to induce large consumption.

It might be possible to have a Commission appointed to enquire into the situation, but Commissions often result in nothing being done, besides that would not lessen the number of miles the apples have to travel nor the freight rate per hundred pounds. The former cannot be reduced. The freight rate might be reduced if it can be shown to the Railway Commission that the railways are making an exorbitant charge for hauling apples. This can only be done by gathering statistics of mileage, rates and population, etc. of railway rates all over the continent. If then the comparison shows that Canadian transportation companies are asking too high a rate a reduction should be ordered. It can be seen, however, how tremendously difficult such a proposition is and how it is so entirely in the hands of the transportation companies that it is difficult to gather the necessary data with which to combat their position.

If the freight rate cannot be reduced then the items going to make up the cost of apples by the carload ready to send West is the next point of attack. Can this price be reduced? It is evident that if Eastern fruit growers want prairie farmers to eat their apples they must be content with lower prices in the orchards and the dealer with smaller profits.

The problem of lower prices for the consumer in Alberta is being solved by the farmers' organizations buying from co-operative marketing organizations in the East and thus eliminating the middlemen altogether. In this way it has been possible to sell fall apples at \$2.50 per barrel and good winter apples at \$3.50 per barrel to farmers at Alberta points.

From a study of the situation here as to the cost of laying down apples it would seem to indicate high prices. This being the case it does not look as though there can ever be much increase in the amount of Ontario apples consumed in this province. When trade conditions have adjusted themselves after the war is over and Ontario apples again find their way to Europe there will be no call to push the sale of apples in Alberta and the apple trade from Ontario will again revert to what it has been in the past—an effort to market the unmarketable remains of a crop, the cream of which has gone across the Atlantic.

The West is looking to British Columbia to supply its fruit for the present, but it must not be forgotten that the wild strawberry, raspberry, currant and gooseberry grow profusely in nearly all parts of the province and where the wild fruit grows cultivated varieties will also grow. Then it has been claimed that where the pin and the choke cherry will grow, the plum, apple and the pear will grow. If this is true, even in a measure, then this province will grow the plum, apple and pear in great abundance, for the wild cherries are found everywhere. In addition to this the apple has been grown successfully in an experimental way at a half a dozen points. The efforts of the late Dr. Wm. Saunders to breed up from the wild apple of Siberia a useful apple for the Prairie Provinces has met with wonderful success. This work is being continued and with

the discovery of hardy root stocks Alberta will soon be growing all the apples needed for home consumption.

Alberta.

GEO. HARCOURT.

Fruit Notes.

The extended period of wet weather has seriously affected the fruit situation. The tomato crop was probably lowered twenty-five per cent. and many growers will not be able to fill half their contracts. The tomatoes blighted in some sections before the crop was developed sufficiently to mature a satisfactory marketable output. As a general thing the prospects for good apples are very poor and some damage has been done by the lesser apple worm. Brown rot has also been noticed to a considerable extent on peaches and plums. Abundance and Burbank plums have been on the market being shipped at 25 to 35 cents per basket. In early peaches, Alexander, Rivers, Greenboro and Triumphs were billed out at 45 to 50 cents per basket. St. Johns are expected on the market in appreciable quantities about the time this issue appears. Early pears have also been coming forward for about ten days. Plums are a good crop, 1,500 eleven-quart baskets of Burbanks went to the factory from the Burlington district ten days ago for which the growers received 20 cents per basket. The Winnipeg market has been receiving consignments from the South, several cars of southern apples arriving almost daily. They sold wholesale at \$4.50 to \$5 per barrel. Washington boxes sold at \$2.15. Six-quart baskets of Ontario apples realized 75 cents, while some six and eleven-quart baskets went wholesale at 35 cents and 50 cents respectively. Ontario Bradshaw plums changed hands in Winnipeg at 50 cents for six-quart baskets.



A Hold-up.

Ontario's Minister of Agriculture estimates that the wet harvest has robbed Ontario farmers of \$20,000,000.

POULTRY.

Selecting Young Cockerels.

Throughout the autumn many of the spring-hatched chicks will be used as food at home or sold for that purpose. If the first selection be made from the cockerels several good ones ought first to be chosen and kept by themselves or marked in such a way that they may be easily identified. Not always will the largest bird mature into the best individual; smaller ones may possess good conformation and give considerable promise. It is unwise to keep a cockerel in the breeding flock simply because it was the largest of the flock when the lot was being culled or disposed of. It would be better to select one that gave some evidence of quality and vigor enough

to bring out his good characters in the next generation. Much of this may be discerned about the head of the bird, for if the forehead is broad and the eye keen the prospects for a vigorous sire are brightened, and such a male is likely to insure a large proportion of fertile eggs. Since the ability of the female to lay eggs is transmitted through the cockerels instead of through the pullets, as was at one time supposed, it is another rung in the ladder to success if a male can be chosen from the get of a parent with a good record. Trap nests are too much trouble on the ordinary farm, yet a hen can be sized up pretty well by watching the flock rather closely and keeping a mental record of their performances. Two or three females that have acquitted themselves well should be given separate quarters during the breeding season, and the eggs from them could be set to produce the best breeding stock for the following year. The bulk of the chicks might be hatched from the best remaining hens, and it would be an easy matter indeed to provide identifying marks. In this way a farmer could improve his fowls under conditions nearer on a parity with those under which poultry breeders operate. Furthermore, the males would come from the best parent stock, would possess better qualifications for service the next year, and they would pass along the capacity for laying eggs. Active birds are early off the roost in the morning and late returning to the roost at night. Lastly select good specimens of the breed, paying attention to shape, color and size.

FARM BULLETIN.

That Merger.

By Peter McArthur.

The rumors of a particularly daring banking merger which were current during the past couple of weeks reminds me of a story that used to be popular on the New York Stock Exchange. One of the members,

Travers, was equally famous for his wit and his stuttering. One day he was standing on the Broad Street steps of the exchange when he saw a man across the street who was trying to sell a parrot. Turning to a group of friends who were standing beside him he stuttered:

"C-c-come across the s-s-street and we'll have some f-fun."

Seeing that a joke was in sight they all followed Travers across the street. Going up to the vendor of the parrot he examined the bird carefully. Finally he asked,

"How much?"

"Twenty-five dollars."

"T-t-too much!"

said Travers. The owner of the bird expatiated volubly on the history and wonderful qualities of the parrot until Travers interrupted him to ask with a particularly violent spasm of stuttering:

"C-c-c-c-can he t-talk?"

"Well," said the parrot owner, "if he couldn't talk better than you I'd wring his neck."

Quick as a flash

Travers turned to his friends and said quietly:

"T-t-the f-fun's postponed."

The newspapers that referred to the matter at all declared that "The merger is off" but I am inclined to think that it is merely postponed.

One good feature of the rumor was the indignation it aroused in all quarters. Even newspapers that are usually regarded as apologists for the banking system ventured a line or two of alarmed protest. No reason was offered for the proposed merger except a further concentration of banking power. Both banks are sound financially and public safety would not be increased by the amalgamation. As far as the public interest is concerned it was uncalled for. Apparently the merger was simply a further step in that movement towards an all-powerful bank that has long been the dream of a few powerful financiers. But the