



Strawberries Grown Between Rows of Young Trees.

Fruit-Growing on Vancouver Island

By H. F. PULLEN

IT is always difficult to get authentic information about the resources and industries in a new country, and prospective values of each, where real estate agents, immigration bureaus and company promoters are always ready to boom a district, property or industry for their own financial benefit. The principal industries of British Columbia are fruit growing, mining, lumbering, fishing, and of course general agriculture. In this list I have put fruit growing first because the mine so often proves a hole in the ground in which to bury one's gold; the quantity of available lumber must of necessity become less every year; the fishing industry, although capable of further development has its limitations; and general agriculture will never be-

come the great industry of the province. Fruit trees are however only just beginning to be planted. The few million trees in isolated orchards are but the nucleus of an industry that is almost boundless. As the lumberman clears off the forest giants for the millman he will be, and is being in a small way, followed by the stumping engine that will prepare the rich valleys for the apple and pear tree, the plum and the prune.

I fancy I can hear someone say: "Here's another booster, with a land company up his sleeve." Nothing of the kind. My information is authentic for it comes from one of the best known and most highly respected growers in the country, a man whose word is his bond, and my statistics are copied by myself from his own shipping books which I have been allowed to inspect. The gentleman I refer to is Mr. R. M. Palmer of Rockside Orchard, Victoria, whose business is now being managed by his son, Mr. W. R. Palmer.

Last year they have had at Rockside a three-quarters crop, which means that the output has been only three-quarters of the average, yet they have been able to ship from fifteen acres of land no less than 31 boxes of apples at an average price of \$1.25 per box; 630 crates of plums and prunes at an average price of 76 cents per crate; 195 crates of cherries, each weighing 24 lbs., at 12½ cents a pound; 69 boxes of pears at from \$1.50 to \$2.00 per box; 313 24-lb crates of strawberries at 12½ cents a pound; 196 crates of raspberries, the same weight, at 10 cents a pound; 174 crates weighing 24 lbs. each, of loganberries at 8 and 10 cents per pound; 149 boxes of rhubarb at from \$1.25 to \$1.50 a box; as well as forced rhubarb, currants, gooseberries, potatoes and numerous other small fruits. Anyone who will take the trouble to work this out will find that the gross income from the orchard has been over four thousand dollars, or a gross return of three hundred dollars per acre, yet this has been only a three-quarter season.

While these returns are fairly good, they are not by any means the maximum that might be obtained under the best conditions. Much of Mr. Palmer's work has been of an experimental nature and therefore he has



Grand Duke Plums, a favourite variety on Vancouver Island.