

A NEW INDUSTRY AT AYLESFORD.

An Account of the Opening of the New Canning Factory Established by the United Fruit Companies.

By F. E. Peck.

The accompanying article, on the new canning factory erected by "The United Fruit Companies of Nova Scotia," appeared in a recent issue of "The United Farmers' Guide," and was written by Mr. F. E. Peck, who has recently taken up his residence in Wolfville. The article has been highly commended by the officers of the fruit companies, as a fine description of the plant in operation. Mr. Peck is a graduate of Cornell University with the degree of Master of Science in Agriculture, instructing in agriculture at this institution during senior and graduate years; later teacher of agriculture at Mt. Hermon School, Mass., moving to Georgia to take charge of the Agricultural Department of the Berry School at Rome. While in the South, Mr. Peck took up Agricultural writing, contributing regularly to "The Southern Agriculturist." Most of the leading Agricultural papers in the United States have carried articles by Mr. Peck, as "The Country Gentleman" published by the Curtis Publishing Company; "The Rural New Yorker," "Hoard's 'Dairyman'" and "The New England Homestead." Before coming to Wolfville, for the past four years, as manager of the Berkshire County Farm Bureau, Mass., Mr. Peck published "The Berkshire County Farmer's Bulletin."

On Nov. 22, at Aylesford, the machinery of the new canning factory erected by the United Fruit Companies of Nova Scotia was set in motion for the first time. There was no formal opening. The daily papers carried no headlines heralding the news to the public. Only the general manager, the president, and board of managers, were present, as the wheels of this new enterprise were set in motion—an enterprise essential in the development of the Companies' policy of efficiency and economy in marketing, and destined to play an important part in the future of the Nova Scotia apple industry.

No doubt there is many an apple grower, who forgetful of the past, thinking only of this year's profitable returns, and with no vision of the future, will criticize the expenditure of money for such a plant and question whether, or not it is justified in view of the present profitable market reports. Such persons should study the history of large marketing enterprises, many of which attribute their success to the by-product end of the business. Strange to say, in not a few cases, the by-products which were formerly wasted have become the most profitable branch of the business. On the other hand, failure of many a co-operative selling association can be traced directly to the lack of facilities for handling the surplus. The Dairyman's League of New York, a very large, strong organization, is today being shaken to its foundations, simply because it has failed to provide a way to take care of its surplus.

Not only will such a plant act as an insurance against a year of low prices, and glutted markets, but as one of the local managers put it, will tend to improve the standard of the U. F. C. pack as more spotted fruit and fruit under colored, will be shipped to the canning factory, thus automatically improving the standard pack of the company, which will in turn create a demand for fancy Nova Scotia apples at a correspondingly high price.

But the object of this article is not to philosophise on, or defend the need of the plant, but rather to acquaint the members of the various fruit companies, and others interested in the plant and its operation. As one steps off the train at Aylesford, he will notice, a short distance down the track, a large cement block building, on a private siding. This building is 135 x 40 feet, is a three story building, and contains an equipment equal to anything in the Dominion today, of its kind, and probably superior to anything east of British Columbia.

Let us turn back to seventy five years, and note how our grand mothers pared by hand, a pail of apples, during the evening, by the fire-side, with only the light of a tallow candle; then by contrast we can better appreciate today's picture, as represented by the U. F. C. factory at Aylesford. As one steps inside the door, a barrel of apples is dumped on an endless carrier, and conveyed to the floor above; in five minutes time a barrel of peeled apples comes down the carrier at the other end of the room, and not one of them has been touched by a human hand—as wonderful and ingenious as is the electric light, which now supercedes the tallow candle of our grandmother's day, so is the modern machinery for paring apples brilliantly wonderful and ingenious, as compared with the slow tedious hand paring of pioneer days.

As we watch the last of the barrel disappearing out of sight, we are met by the superintendent, Mr. J. W. Corner

a man thoroughly acquainted with all branches of canning, coming from Ontario, where for nineteen years he has been managing similar plants.

With Mr. Corner to explain details, we follow the apples upstairs. From the endless carrier the apples are dumped into a tank of water, about forty feet long and four wide. Just above the tank on one side runs a slowly revolving shaft, upon which are paddles, these constantly keep the apples in the fifteen different sections, working towards the fifteen paring machines, located on the opposite side of the tank. Here the apples surround a narrow boxed in run-way; on either side of this run-way is a mechanical hand, which alternately lifts an apple up from the tank, first on one side, then on the other, placing it in the narrow box-like run-way—here let it be said that practically all apples float stem end up. Now a mechanical device like two open hands ready to catch a ball, comes out and down from the paring machine, closes on the floating apple, and returns to the machine, placing the apple squarely on the fork, more truly on the centre than would be possible by hand. In a twinkling the peel flies off, another move and the apple is kicked off, peeled and cored, another fork has moved into place, but the mechanical hands have another apple ready, and so on and on, rapidly and tirelessly, with mechanical precision, and accuracy, fifteen of these machines eat into the carloads of apples at the rate of 600 to 800 bushels per day when running at capacity.

Cores and peelings drop on an endless carrier, and are conveyed to one end of the building where later they will be made into vinegar. The pared apples fall on another similar endless carrier, and go to the other end of the building where they are dumped into a brine solution in a tank on the floor below. The function of this brine being to keep the apples from discoloring. From this tank the apples are taken in pails, placed on another endless carrier about forty feet long, which carries the pails down between two rows of girls, seated at long tables on either side. Here the apples are trimmed and quartered, and passed on to the inspection table, then to the washing vat, where revolving paddles not only wash, but also work the apples on to a carrier which conveys them to the filling table, where forty gallon cans, twenty on a side, can be filled at once.

At this point it is interesting to note the labor saving device for bringing the empty cans and putting them in place to be filled. We might expect this to be the work of two or three boys, but no boys are in evidence. A shoot from the floor above, where the empty cans are stored, is filled with cans all the time; these come down the inclined shoot on their side, but as they near the filling table, by an ingenious spiral turn in the shoot, the cans arrive one at a time, right side up, and gently drop on to the carrier at the end of the table where they are to be filled.

At the filling table a girl on either side quickly fills the cans; they are again placed on the carriers and moved on to be sealed—a process in which the cans are filled with live steam and water—they now pass into the exhauster, a machine which removes any air from the cans, they then travel on their endless track to the sealing machine, where from a stack of covers, one drops on each can, and the heavy powerful machine gives the can a whirl, and it is sealed air-tight, and perfect.

One step more, however is needed—this is the cooking process. The cans now move into the large Wonder Cooker, a Canadian machine, made by The Brown, Boggs Co., of Hamilton, Ontario. This Cooker has a capacity of 5000 gallons a day, and is said to be the best machine of its kind on the market. Here, under pressure of superheated steam, the apples are given just enough cooking to destroy all forms of germ life that might cause fermentation, yet not enough to impair the color texture, or quality of the fruit. This is the most important step in the

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canning process, and requires the knowledge of an expert to put out a uniform product of the highest quality. Different qualities require different lengths of time in cooking. If all varieties were given the same amount of cooking, some would come out underdone, some would be all right, and others would be a mush.

When this important step has been completed, the cans are mechanically run out of the cooker, and down an inclined plane to a tank of water in the basement, to be cooled, then stacked, ready to be labelled and boxed for shipment as desired. It is a wonderful sight to look into this great frost-proof cellar, already starting to fill with these bright cans of apples.

About forty hands are required to operate the plant. How many more would be needed to do the work of the endless conveyors, mechanical parers, washers, cookers and other labor saving devices, it would be hard to say. The whole plant is planned as a unit of efficiency; empty cans and apples start from the top floor, work down, going the round of the second floor, and finally ending up ready for shipment in the basement.

Not only is the plant a model in efficiency, it is equally true "the last word" in sanitation. There seems nothing left to be desired in the way of cleanliness. From the time the apples reach the water bath on the top floor, where they are washed and pared, cleanliness and efficiency go hand in hand till the finished product leaves the factory.

GEES—BY A YOUNG GOOSE.

(From the Boston Transcript.)

Here is a Kansas schoolboy's essay of geese. "Geese" is a low, heavy-set bird composed mostly of meat and feathers. His head sits on one side and he sits on the other. Geese can't sing much on account of the dampness of the moisture. There ain't no between to his toes and he carries a toy balloon in his stomach to keep him from sinking. Some geese when they get big are called ganders and have curls on their tails. Ganders don't have to sit and hatch, but they just loaf and go swimming and eat. If I was a goose I'd rather be a gander anytime.

When a girl weighing 180 pounds answers to the name of "Birdie" the eternal fitness of things gets an awful jolt.

Immigration to the United States from any foreign country has been suspended for a period of one year. The ban will not be effective until two months after the passage of the bill by Congress. But the Canadian dollar can go, and probably will continue to go, where Canadians can't.

Suttie, that barbaric custom in which a Hindu widow cremates herself, or is cremated on the funeral pyre of her husband, has been abolished by the State of Nepal, India. The State of Nepal has instituted many reforms recently, notably the prohibition of opium and alcohol.

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LOTS OF APPLES IN THE VALLEY

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The final stage of marketing operations of the apple industry season in the Annapolis Valley is now being entered in most warehouses. Packing of all except the harder varieties such as Ben Davis, Nonpareil or Roxburgh Russet, has been completed. Shipments of Baldwin, Spy, Golden Russet, Starks and such like are being made as fast as ships can be provided. The yield of 1920 on the whole was below that of 1919, which was exceptional in point of quantity, but the quality of the fruit, conditions of the weather, and labor for picking, and the average price per barrel tree run, have proved much better. As emphasized however, the advantage of ensuring the best possible crop, it is interesting to note that the costliest apples have proved the cheapest to the buyers. Much of the three dollar a barrel run resulted in loss which must be compensated for by profit netted by the three-fifty and three-seventy-five tree run fruit.

The co-operative growers report returns of \$3.92 per barrel average of all grades from early shipments, but the interesting question as to whether the growers who stood loyal to the companies or those who sold to agents and other dealers will get the highest average tree run, cannot be answered yet a while. According to a conservative estimate by the shippers there are about 200,000 barrels available for export.

W. C. T. U. Notes.

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Let us not judge one another any more, but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way. RM. 14-81. Business meeting of the W. C. T. U. the last Monday of every month.

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A butcher boy says he has often heard of the fore-quarters of the globe, but he has never heard anyone say anything about the hind quarters.

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