

## THE ORCHARD.

### Fruit Export Work.

BEFORE these notes are published the harvesting of mid-season varieties of apples and pears will be in full swing, and from now on until the end of the export season the orchardist will have little time or thought for anything outside the picking, packing, grading, and forwarding of fruit for shipment overseas. The systematic orchardist will be well prepared for this period of the season by having everything in readiness well before harvesting activities commence. If this is done (and there are a hundred and one large and small jobs that can be done) much confusion and time will be saved when the rush of work commences.

In picking all varieties of fruit there are two main essentials that must be kept prominently under the picker's observation—colour requirements and stage of maturity. There should be no great difficulty as regards colour requirements, as they are defined each year according to variety under the conditions of Government guarantee for the season. Stage of maturity is governed by one or two factors, the chief of these being a distinct change of ground colour from green to light yellow. One cannot overemphasize the need for careful handling of fruit for export, both in the orchard and in the packing-shed. In the orchard much damage is caused by rough handling in so far as the fruit is carelessly pulled from the tree by force, which usually results not only in finger bruises on the fruit but also in the stem of the fruit being often left behind, thus rendering it unfit for export. This can be obviated to a great extent by the picker taking hold of the fruit with the whole hand (not just the thumb and first finger as is usual) and giving it a sharp upwards turn.

Then, again, overfilling the picking-bag, dropping the fruit carelessly into the bag, and carelessly transferring it therefrom to the orchard case, will and does cause much damage to the fruit and financial loss to the grower.

### Cool-storing for the Local Market.

Fruit intended for cool store for the local market should be as carefully handled as that intended for export. It has been proved without any possible doubt that only good sound fruit can be expected to keep in cool store over a long period. It is futile to cool-store any fruit the epidermis of which has been broken and expect it to come out as sound as it went in. Storage rots take an exceedingly heavy toll annually of fruit placed in cool store. Fortunately, however, rots such as pink-rot and blue-mould, &c., can only make an entrance through a broken skin such as insect puncture, and skin broken at the stem, &c.

### Spraying Operations.

Growers are advised not to suspend their applications of arsenate of lead at too early a date. Codlin moth and leaf-roller caterpillar are usually still active well into April, and it is therefore advisable to continue with the arsenical applications until a few weeks prior to picking.

As the danger from black-spot infection is not yet passed it is advisable to continue with fungicidal sprays for a while longer. Where brown-rot fungus was troublesome a careful examination should be made, and all mummified fruits removed from the trees and ground and destroyed by burning. In addition to this an application of bordeaux 5-4-50 is recommended, as soon as possible after the fruit has been picked, as a partial controllant of the disease.

Orchardists should thoroughly investigate the results obtained during the season from the spraying compounds used and the methods employed in preparation and application. When unsatisfactory results are obtained something is wrong. Factors which contribute to success are the thorough