COMMERCIAL ORCHARDING IN WISCONSIN.

J. G. Buehler, Ithaca.

President, Members of Wisconsin State Horticultural Society, Ladies and Gentlemen:—I am pleased to meet with you here today, my first opportunity, and to present to you a paper on Commercial Orcharding in Wisconsin. I hope it will be interesting to you all through. I will touch only some of the important points and leave details for discussion. I am not as old in this profession as some of you here today. It is four years only since I have given my time and attention to this calling which came to me through Prof. Goff, while I attended the short course. My first lesson in horticulture was close observation, this lesson alone, if I had not learned anything else in short course instruction, I would feel richly repaid for my expense there, so my theories are based upon my own observation. From a commercial standpoint, Wisconsin lacks recognition as a commercial fruit growing state as compared with some of our neighboring states and why? I believe we have in this state as good climate, condition, location and soils for orcharding as can be found anywhere. Wisconsin apples have won prizes at the Pan-American and Omaha expositions and World’s Fair at Chicago for quality, flavor and beauty that are second to no other state in the Union, but we lack quantity or large commercial orchards. I do not think that we can compete with Missouri, southern Illinois, or the Ozark regions in extent or with some varieties, this need not be so, prospect for intensive fruit culture was never brighter, and early apples are in greater demand each year. Inquiring recently of a large and reliable fruit firm in Chicago, that handled my crop for two seasons, as to varieties they would recommend for Wisconsin and gave best satisfaction, replied:

“We have no hesitation in recommending the McMahon White and Wealthies, the finest produced and are in great demand. Alexander while not so good quality are fine sellers on account of their size and color, but if they blight all over the state as bad as they do in my section I would not recommend planting them. Oldenburg are as profitable as any for commercial purpose, will

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reach highest perfection where cold and heat extremes predomi-
nate, and Snows, while subject to scab, give them plenty of
room, and they are no worse than others. These four, Mc-
Mahan White, Wealthies, Oldenburg and Snows, are standard,
persistent, prolific bearers, and will not the grower more money
than the other odd kinds raised. They are also ironclads, safe
to plant anywhere in this state where apples can be grown.”

Thousands of farmers in Wisconsin on high and hilly land
would be more profitable with commercial orchards thus adding
to the resources of the state. What chance have we to compete
with the southern or western apple grower for quality, and that
most desirable of all, an early apple? Last season buyers
came to me from St. Louis to buy early apples. If I had hun-
dreds of acres I could have sold them all. It seems to me that
early apples do better north and winter apples do better south,
where they have longer season, for instance, Ben Davis grows
to highest merchantable perfection in Missouri. I deem it
absurd for Wisconsin to plant a single Ben Davis for commercial
purpose. Long keeping varieties without immediate cold stor-
age are not always as profitable as early apples when you take
in consideration capital, shrinkage and labor involved in storing
and repacking. Then why not exchange such commodity with
the southern grower? He comes north to buy our early apples;
let us go south and buy his winter apples and thus keep up a
greater demand for apples. Plant but few varieties for the
commercial orchard of high quality; then feed them, spray them
and cultivate. I am positively convinced that it is abso-
lutely necessary to spray thorough to keep an orchard thrifty
and to grow merchantable fruit. Cultivation supplemented with
cover crop is the safest method to follow. Early or late varieties
grown in sod will not keep so well, for they lack vitality and
are short lived. Some agitation is abroad as to mulch method
following nature’s plan. I condemn it for two reasons, first,
that it is dangerous on account of fire; second, roots are induced
to grow too near the surface. Disaster will follow unless this
mulch is kept up continually. Under only one condition I
would recommend it, and that’s to smother out quack grass.
Now I wish to touch the most important point of all, and that’s
the disposal of a crop. We have paid attention to all the details
and are now looking forward for a crop to compensate our
efforts. Therefore we must not only raise the crop but we
must study market and crop conditions east and west, north and south, all over this broad land, that we may act in some capacity of business principles. When there is a general good crop all over we can not expect so much, but when there is a failure or partial failure in the harvest in the apple producing section of the country, you are not misled by local condition. There will be a demand for our crop at a fair price. We must also study the art of packing. It is a science to pack fruit properly, yet can be done by the average man if he is careful to handle it from the time he puts his hand on it to pick it from the tree until he delivers it, and keeps culls out. I hope that Wisconsin will be noted for honest people as well as for fine products. It is now customary in the newer apple growing section that buyers do their own packing. They then know what their packages contain, while in the old apple growing section in the state of New York farmers do their own packing and put their stamp or trade mark on the package, haul them to the station where buyers bid on them and farmers receive the benefit from competition besides their fruit is advertised individually. I believe in advertising and wish such conditions would exist here in our own state instead of commission men getting all the cream there is in it, which is often the case. We must also watch our legislature, make our wants known to our representatives to use their influence for the farmer's rights. No class of people are more deserving than the tillers of the soil for transportation and education, and I heartily approve Governor La Follette's message.

At the suggestion of Mr. Gibbs, discussion of papers on orcharding was postponed until all should have been read.

COMMERCIAL ORCHARDING.

Geo. T. Tippin.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen:—To write a paper on the subject assigned me would have been a difficult undertaking for me for my own state, where we are in a small measure acquainted with conditions and surroundings, but, to prepare an intelligent paper on commercial orcharding to be read before