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CONDITION OF FRUIT CROPS MAY 1955SUMMARY

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The general outlook for fruit crops at the end of May throughout most of fruit growing regions of Canada was rather favourable. Winter damage was slight. Although some injury to fruit buds and blossoms occurred in the soft fruit growing areas of Ontario and British Columbia, present indications suggest that the effects of this damage will be limited. In the important fruit growing sections of western Ontario about ten days of dry, cool weather followed rains at the middle of May. This slowed the rate of growth so that crops which earlier had been two weeks ahead of last year were by the end of May only about one week ahead. It is becoming apparent in the Niagara district that some damage has been done to the roots of fruit trees (particularly peaches and plums) due to wind pressure of last fall's hurricane. In British Columbia all fruit crops are about two weeks later than usual. Since the 1955 fruit crops will still be subject to many hazards throughout the growing season this report should be regarded only as a general summary of conditions at the latter part of May.

Strawberries - Reports from strawberry growing areas indicate that plantations generally came through the winter in good condition. Some winter damage and a low plant population were reported in sections of western Ontario but elsewhere crop prospects ranged from normal to excellent. Blossoming was particularly heavy in eastern Ontario and Quebec. A considerably heavier crop than last year was anticipated on Vancouver Island and a fair crop appeared to be in prospect in the Fraser Valley of British Columbia. With the British Columbia crop about two weeks later than usual this year due to backward weather and with the more favourable outlook in the relatively later areas of eastern Canada, it would seem that the period of heaviest marketings will come a little later in the season than usual. Reports indicate increased plantings in the Maritime Provinces and British Columbia. These will not of course influence production this year.

Raspberries - Raspberries came through the winter with very little injury in all provinces where this crop is grown commercially. In eastern Ontario growth was good and the outlook generally very favourable. Leafing out was well advanced in all areas of western Ontario. In the Fraser Valley of British Columbia crop prospects were also good. An average crop was anticipated in Nova Scotia.

Tender Tree Fruits - Reports indicate a heavy blossom on peaches in Ontario in most areas followed by a heavy set on all varieties. Conditions were good except for some peach leaf curl infection. British Columbia peach orchards came through the winter in good condition. Although there was some frost damage to fruit buds it was not sufficient to materially affect the crop.

1/ Material in this release is based on reports made on crop conditions during the latter part of May. This report was prepared in the Agriculture Division of the Dominion Bureau of Statistics from information received from the various Provincial Departments of Agriculture and the Canada Department of Agriculture. The material for Ontario was submitted by the Ontario Committee on Fruit and Vegetable Statistics.

Pears in western Ontario passed full bloom by the middle of May. The set of fruit was normal to heavy throughout the area. In British Columbia pears came through the winter in good condition and blossomed heavily.

In Ontario sweet cherries set heavily in most areas although there was some frost damage at blossom time. Sour varieties also showed a heavy blossom and the set of fruit was heavy as far as could be determined at time of reporting.

Apples - The condition of apple orchards during May in most commercial production areas of Canada was good. Indications in Nova Scotia, Quebec and British Columbia were for good crops. Winter injury in all areas was practically absent. In western Ontario all varieties blossomed heavily and crop prospects were favourable.

A particularly heavy blossom was reported in Quebec. In Quebec and British Columbia there was some doubt as to whether weather conditions had been satisfactory for pollination; however, it was felt that the crop outlook was quite favourable.

#### MARITIME PROVINCES

In Prince Edward Island strawberry plantations wintered well and indications towards the end of May promised a good crop. The setting out of new plants was almost completed and a considerable increase in the acreage was anticipated. Reports indicate that there is increasing interest in the blueberry industry in that province. Demonstration plots have been set up at several points and approximately 300 acres have been brought into production in one district.

In Nova Scotia strawberry plantings which were mulched came through the winter with only moderate injury. Where plants were not mulched relatively severe winter damage was reported but, as 90 per cent of the beds were covered, the amount of injury was limited. Plantings fruiting for the first time this year are about one week later than in 1954 due to cold weather. During the latter part of May a few blossoms were appearing. Indications suggested an average crop. Old plantings are also late in developing and the yield was expected to be lower. Growers have finished new plantings in the Annapolis Valley and a slight increase in acreage was reported. Farther north, in the Masstown area of Colchester County plantings were about 50 per cent completed while in Antigonish County this work had just started.

Raspberries came through the winter in good condition with only a moderate amount of winter injury and an average crop was anticipated. Many new blueberry fields and "burnings" are coming into production with a larger crop than last year indicated.

Apple orchards appeared to be in a favourable condition with no frost damage reported. In spite of the hurricane last fall the trees were well budded with a better than average production indicated for all varieties. Spraying and other orchard operations were well underway, and with average weather conditions, the outlook was for a good crop.

Pear trees were in a healthy condition in all areas and an average or better than average blossom indicated. No frost damage was apparent and the trees did not appear to have been damaged by the hurricane last autumn. The plum tree population has been reduced by black knot disease. Trees not affected, however, were showing a heavy blossom. Winter injury was reported on peach trees and the outlook was for an average crop of this fruit.

In New Brunswick strawberry plantations came through the winter in very good condition. Development to date of reporting has been satisfactory with crop prospects generally encouraging. Some bloom was appearing in the Grand Lake area and other early districts. Raspberries generally wintered well although some breakage from snow was reported in certain areas. Winter weather conditions favourable for blueberries.

There was no evidence of low temperature injury to apple orchards but considerable damage by mice occurred, especially in the Fredericton area. All varieties but especially McIntosh were heavily budded throughout the apple growing area of the province. Indications are for a full heavy bloom. Spraying and orchard work were well advanced in spite of somewhat unfavourable weather.

#### QUEBEC

Strawberry plantations in Quebec came through the winter in very good condition. In the Montreal district and the southern part of the province plants were in full bloom by about May 27th and prospects were for a good crop. Raspberries also wintered well and, although not in bloom, showed good prospects.

In the apple growing district around Montreal full bloom was reached by about May 18th. Where bloom had appeared it was very heavy while in the Quebec City district (where the orchards had not yet blossomed) the appearance of the buds indicated a heavy bloom. During full bloom in the Montreal district, temperatures dropped to 32° and 34° F. on two occasions. The low temperatures and high winds were not favourable for pollination and there was some doubt whether a good set was obtained. However, it was felt that the blossom was so heavy that even with only a small proportion setting fruit a heavy crop would occur.

#### ONTARIO

Eastern Ontario (the section of the province east of Toronto)

In Eastern Ontario most strawberry plantings came through the winter in good condition. Growth was good during the early part of May but the rain of May 25th was needed. Blossom was heavy and the early set of fruit quite promising. It was anticipated that the first picking would get underway in the early areas during the second week of June.

Very little winter injury was reported in raspberry plantations and growth had been good. Moisture conditions were very favourable. Considerable new acreage has been planted this spring. Growers have been applying sprays for the control of Anthracnose and Spur Blight.

The first apple scab spray in Eastern Ontario was applied during the week of April 18 and the weather was subsequently favourable for scab control. However, in a few orchards some primary infection was showing on the under side of the spur leaves. All varieties blossomed heavily with the exception of a few blocks of Spys where conditions were described as "spetty". During the week of May 16th early leafing varieties were in full bloom throughout most of the district and the weather was favourable for pollination. The initial set of apples appeared to be generally heavy. Foliage and growth appeared especially good in most regions.

All pear varieties carried a heavy blossom and the set of fruit seemed promising. Psylla sprays had been applied and foliage was good. All plum varieties showed a heavy blossom and the weather was favourable for fruit setting. In the case of sour cherries no winter bud injury or frost damage occurred during the blossom period. All plantings carried a heavy blossom and the set of fruit was good with promise of a full crop.

Western Ontario (the section of the province west of Toronto excluding northern Ontario and the head of the Lakes)

In western Ontario there was considerable variation in the condition of strawberries at the time of reporting. In the Georgian Bay area the prospects were very good while in the Niagara district there was considerable damage from winter "browning" and heaving on unmulched patches. Throughout the area plant population was low because of a long, dry period during the time when new plantings were being formed in the 1954 season. However, heavy plantings last year will compensate somewhat for the decrease in plant population. Bearing plants were near full bloom in northern areas at May 15th while the first harvest in Essex County and in the Niagara region was anticipated towards the end of May.

Raspberries were reported to have wintered well with little loss except in Lambton County. Leafing out was well advanced in all areas and the bloom was opening in Essex County by May 15th.

Sweet cherries set heavily in all areas except the London district where some frost damage occurred at blossom time. In Essex and Kent counties there was also some indication of light freezing damage in late April. In major areas of Niagara and Essex cover sprays were being applied by May 15th. In all districts except London sour varieties blossomed heavily beginning at May 1st in Essex County and reaching the last peak in the Georgian Bay district on May 15th. Set of fruit was heavy in all areas where the season was sufficiently advanced to enable observations to be made.

Peaches were in full bloom from April 27 to May 2nd in Essex, Norfolk and the Niagara district. With the exception of orchards in Norfolk County the blossom was heavy and all varieties set well. In the Niagara district widespread, well established peach leaf curl infection was reported and some light damage was also apparent in Norfolk. Otherwise, conditions were good.

Early varieties of apples were in full bloom during the first week of May in southern counties and Spys were past the peak at May 15th. In the Georgian Bay area all varieties were at or passing full bloom by the middle of the month. All areas reported heavy blossom and prospects were favourable.

Pear trees were in full bloom in Essex County by the end of April and elsewhere by May 7th. Petal fall was nearly complete in the Georgian Bay district by May 15th. With the exception of the London district where the blossom was below average the set of fruit was normal to heavy throughout western Ontario.

The date of full bloom on early varieties of plums ranged from April 28th in the Niagara area to May 10th near Toronto. All varieties had apparently set heavily by May 15th but a considerable drop was anticipated.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

In British Columbia all crops are about two weeks later than normal due backward weather conditions this spring. Mild weather in the coastal districts a relatively heavy cover of snow in the colder areas brought strawberry plant- through the winter in good condition. On May 25th the crop was in full bloom ncouver Island and the outlook was for a considerably better harvest than in At the same time blossoming in the Fraser Valley had started and prospects vourable. This year a larger quantity than usual of certified plants has out.

Raspberries in the Fraser Valley came through the winter comparatively injury except for slight bud damage apparent in certain districts. Crop s were good.

In all apple growing areas of the province the trees came through the r in good condition and everything points to an excellent crop of all varieties. blossom was good and although the weather was cold it was expected that pollina- on would be satisfactory.

All districts reported pear trees in good condition with heavy blossom. Cold weather, however, may have interfered with pollination. Showers may have aggravated the fireblight situation but preventative sprays were being applied in the major pear districts.

Peach trees came through the winter in good condition although there was some damage from late frost in March in the Northern part of the Okanagan and on some of the higher benches farther south in the Valley. However, it was not anticipated that this injury would substantially reduce the total crop. Although some injury from spring frost occurred to apricots in certain parts of the Summer- land-Penticton area, a good crop was anticipated.

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