

Report of Standing Committee on Citrus Fruits.

BY L. B. SKINNER.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen:

When I was notified of my appointment as a member of the Committee on Citrus fruits, I made up my mind that I should surely be there, and even up to today I was of the opinion that I would be there, though there has been creeping into my consciousness, the idea that some thing was going to happen to prevent my getting there after all.

It is with exceeding great regret that I give up the pleasure of meeting the fruit growers of the State from whom I always learn something of value, and with whom I always enjoy the time spent. I say time spent, but I ought to rather say, time saved. The towering practical, Mr. Waite, the golden, Mr. McCarty, with his pleasant smile, and hearty ways, the faithful, hard working, Mr. Painter, all these I shall miss.

I had intended to make a verbal report, as I had been unable to get any replies from my fellow committeemen, as to what form our report should take. The wise men from the East, Phelps, Hart, Hubbard, have recorded, in time past, about all there is to know of orange culture and perhaps a little more, and we, that are learners, would rather sit still and listen that we may learn more, like Sampson, or Boardman. Perhaps in the past year I have learned some things that will be interesting to fruit growers.

I have extensively used a power duster, and I find that it keeps fruit bright, but

it induces scale, and a good deal of it. I find that in a multitude of varieties of the orange there is decided trouble. It were better that a good many of these varieties had never been born.

I hear Parson Brown fruit talked up, it is a pretty poor fruit to my notion, and Marsh Seedless grapefruit, be sure you want it before you plant it. There is none better than the Duncan Grapefruit, but I am afraid that there has been a large quantity of buds, not accurate to name, of this variety sent out. Not intentionally, but by error, and I suppose that this often happens, in other cases too. It is disappointing to plant Tardiffs, and find that you are going to reap Sweet Sevilles, or Parson Browns, and find you have an ordinary seedling.

The Enterprise seedless orange, sometimes called Stark Seedless, is one of the best bearers, and of a very good quality, of the ordinary oranges, and commercially, has given me the best of results.

I have been interested in the comparison of the Valencia and the Tardiff oranges. I thought for a long time that they were one and the same variety, but under a different name. I find upon looking them carefully over, that they are really distinct. That they are different in several ways. The Valencia is of a deeper color, less of the lemon in color. Then too the inside of the fruit is better colored than the Tardiff. On the other hand I think that the Tardiff is the better

keeper, both as to season, that is time of shipping, and as to its ability to hold up en route. And as to keeping qualities the fruit en route, that remark opens up to me the one question that occupies my thinker these days to the exclusion of any other. How shall we make our fruit keep and carry better? What is the reason of the epidemics of rot such as attacked us at times the last two years? If I knew, and could answer these questions aright, you would have a paper worth your listening to. I would like to ask your agricultural chemists what effect nitrate of potash would have on the stability of fruit? I think from a test made for two years that it is decidedly favorable to the keeping quality. I would like to ask some of the professors whether paraffine would tend to keep the fruit from rotting.

I would like to ask whether, in the opinion of growers, late cultivation tends to make fruit rot in transit?

The markets are all practically done with Florida citrus fruits, and yet we could just as well grow enough Tardiffs to keep them supplied for six weeks yet. Suppose there is some waste, what of it, we can stand it. And grapefruit—I ate

grapefruit in July last year from off the tree that was the finest thing I ever ate on a hot day in my life. I expect to eat it again this year, and if we can get a grapefruit in April, May and June, I am willing to risk its selling at a paying price.

I believe the variety to be a distinct variety, but will know better when it is tested longer. We ought to ship citrus fruits from October to June continuously, and when we do, the fruit industry need fear no competition.

James Russell Lowell has an eleventh Beatitude "Blessed is he that has nothing to say and cannot be persuaded to say it." I am reminded that I would rather work at growing oranges than talk about it. I grow a considerable quantity of fruit, and some of it is the best I ever saw and some of it is the worst, I am sorry to say. I know a very little, I am hoping to learn a great deal more, and again I want to express my regret at not being able to be with you. I wish you a very interesting and profitable meeting. I know that your officers have been untiring in their efforts at the proper preparations for such a meeting.