

Big Canal Will Make Chile Our Winter Fruit Garden

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SANTIAGO, Chile—How would you like to have luscious peaches at Christmas, ripe plums, pears and cherries in the heart of midwinter, and great white muskmelons when the ground is covered with snow? This is what you may expect from Chile now that the Panama canal is completed and the war demand for American goods is turning our shipping that way. The vessels carrying our wares to Pacific South America will furnish cheap return freights, and the prospect is that in the near future many of them will come loaded with fruit. The seasons on this side of the equator are the opposite of ours. The fruit begins to ripen here late in our fall, and the Chileans have plums, peaches and pears ready for the market in the midst of our winter.

From now on Valparaiso will be within two weeks of New York, and the canal has placed a South American California, with its summer crops, almost at our doors. The prospect of a great exportation of Chilean fruits to the United States is exciting the farmers. The government is investigating the subject, and schools for teaching fruit growing and the packing and exportation of fruits are being established. Chile has long been the chief fruit-growing country of the lower half of our hemisphere. It already has orchards of hundreds of acres ready for harvest yielding about 50,000,000 gallons of wine every year. There is no land upon earth that has better fruit possibilities and its products are now to be dropped upon Uncle Sam's tables.

Breeding Special Plants.

In order to give you some idea of what this great industry may do for the United States, I have spent a day with Don Salvador Izquierdo S. in going over his fruit and nursery plantations, situated near the town of Nos and about twelve miles from Santiago. Don Salvador is the fruit king of Chile, and I might almost call him the Luther Burbank of his sister continent. He has an irrigated hacienda of about 1,600 acres, covered with gardens and orchards, and plantations for the raising of flowers, plants and trees of almost every variety. He has now more than 13,000,000 individual plants in the estate and he ships plants by the tens of thousands to all parts of Chile, and also across the Andes to Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil. He is not only a grower of nursery stock, but is likewise a scientific breeder of new varieties. Although he has introduced into Chile more than 4,500 new varieties of fruits and plants, and he has himself originated by cross breeding hundreds of valuable trees and flowers. Some of his experiments have been along the line of creating trees not subject to certain blights and pests. He has already created fourteen new varieties of apples not affected by the insect known as the schizoneura lanifera, that is now destroying our apples of many parts of the west. The new varieties are grafted onto the stalks of ordinary trees. The insect crawls up the stalk, but it stops where the grafts begin, and the trees and their fruit are found to be safe.

Training Roots of Trees.

Among the other experiments of Senor Izquierdo S. is the elongating of the roots of the eucalyptus and other trees so that they can be grown upon the dry lands of the tops of the mountains. This is done by sprouting them in pots, where the young trees are fed with nitrate of soda and treated in such a way that their roots are about four times the usual size. Being planted, these long roots go far down into the soil and tap the underground layers of water, and are therefore able to resist the drought. It was in recognition of this discovery that the Royal Agricultural society of London has just unanimously elected Don Salvador Izquierdo S. a member of that body.

But I cannot give you a better idea of the possibilities of fruit raising in Chile than by taking you with Don Salvador over his great fruit estate. We start at the station in Santiago and within an hour have ridden out to the little station of Nos. Our way is through the central valley of Chile, and we see great farms and vineyards on both sides of the railroad. At Nos we leave the train and take the private car owned by Don Salvador for five miles away. The car is pulled by a horse, but the Chilean driver makes the animal go on the gallop. We travel over a road lined with poplars a hundred feet high, by great fields in which fat cattle are grazing and within a short time are on Don Salvador's property. The estate is surrounded by magnificent scenery. It lies on a plain at the foot of the mountains, sloping toward the sea. Just enough give the fall required for the irrigation ditches. These are fed by a branch of the Mapocho river, a rushing stream so large and swift that it not only irrigates the 1,000 acres of plants, but also furnishes the electric current that runs all the machinery. One of the canals turns a turbine that gives the estate 125 horsepower. This plant lights the hacienda and other buildings, it runs saw mills and threshers and moves the machines of a large fruit packing and cannery establishment.

Use American Machinery.

As we ride in we pass a threshing machine which is moved by this plant. It was imported from America and its noise carries us back to our farms at home. The grain is coming in from the fields in enormous carts and it is fed directly from the carts to the threshers. As the barley pours forth it is caught in buckets made of skin holding a bushel or more and carried by men to a great pile on the ground.

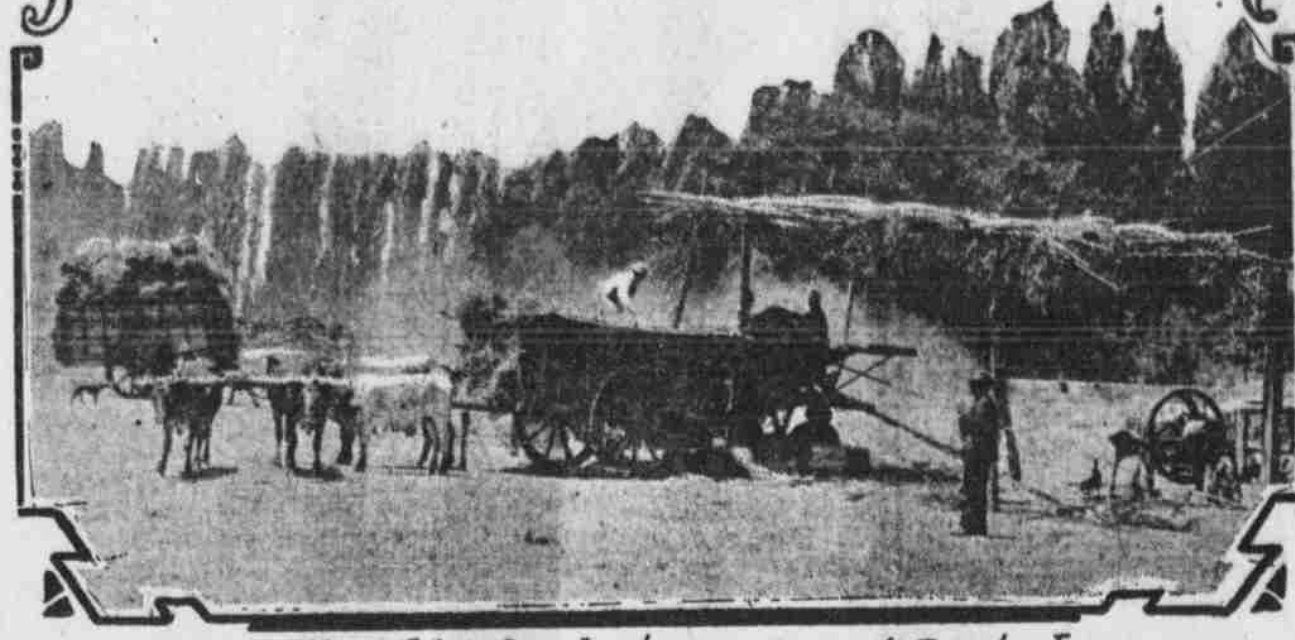
We next walk to the sawmill nearby, where the men are making lumber out of some of the trees that Don Salvador has planted within the last twenty years. The soil and climate here are such that trees will grow twice as fast as in our own country. There are eucalyptus 100 feet high that are not over fifteen years of age, and pines as big around as a horsehead that have been planted within the last generation. The big trees on this estate are numbered by the hundreds of thousands and they have all been planted since 1884, which was the time when Don Salvador began to turn his ancestors' grain and dairy farm into a nursery.

Some of these trees are raised solely for wood and there are the forests of eucalyptus containing thousands of individual trees that are being grown for this purpose. Some of these trees are only a year or so old while others are from seventy-five to 100 feet high.

Around the large fields making up the plantation are rows of Lombardy poplars 100 feet high. These are the fences of the estate, and they make walls of green of wonderful beauty. They often follow the irrigation ditches, making a double row of these trees, walling the orchard or pasture within. The rows of poplars are often 120 feet high, and that although they are only sixteen years old. The custom of using them for fences and to mark



Watering the plants in Chile's biggest nursery



Threshing by electric power at Santa Lues

out the boundary lines is common throughout the central valley of Chile. This adds greatly to the beauty of the country. It changes the face of the landscape and makes it look greatly like the farming regions of France. It is safe to say that the country has tens of millions of these beautiful trees.

Trees Divide the Estate.

This great estate is divided by such trees into sections. Some are devoted to grain, some to vegetables and fruit-growing, and others to the raising of plants, flowers and trees like our large nurseries at home. Going onward, we are soon in the nursery part of the estate. We pass rapidly from one great tree-walled enclosure to another, riding on the railway. There are so many separate plantations, and the varieties are so different, that I cannot describe them. Don Salvador tells me that altogether he has 80,000 different species of trees on the farm. He sells a half-million eucalyptus trees every year, and receives single orders for as many as 40,000 trees at one time. He has one plantation of citrus trees in their various stages of cultivation, and here you may see oranges, lemons and grapefruit of every variety. He has long lines of poplars from stock that came from South Carolina, and in one of the nurseries there are 20,000 acacias. In another section we find 200,000 peach trees ready for sale, and as we pass this we come into acres of apple trees, ranging in size from mere sprouts to almost as high as our heads. There are 150,000 apple trees in this field, and they are twice as tall and as thrifty as trees of the same age in our American nurseries. I had a snapshot made of Don Salvador and myself as we stood in the nursery to show the height of the trees.

Twelve Miles of Railroad.

Taking the car, we ride to the floral part of the establishment. There are more than twelve miles of railroad on the estate, and we can go rapidly from one place to another. The flowers are a wonder. They are of almost every variety of the temperate and tropical zones. There are great hothouses containing thousands of orchids, and in one section are 30,000 rose trees, including more than 120 varieties. There are also vast beds of lotuses and water lilies, and near them are groves of persimmons, which Don Salvador is introducing into Chile. He has forty varieties of this fruit brought in from Japan, Korea and China, and he expects to make the Asiatic persimmon as popular in Chile as it is now in the states.

Don Salvador is also experimenting in creating dwarf varieties of plants and trees. He showed me a peach tree as high as my knee that had ripe fruit on it, and a fig tree in bearing that was of the same size. He is making the famous dwarf pines of Japan, and has some which are now a foot high and will remain so for years.

It is interesting to note that fruit and trees from everywhere, and that at great cost. As I walked through the plantation he showed me forty new varieties of vines that had just been unpacked. They came from Europe and were in excellent condition. But this was not so of some other flowers, an order costing \$10,000 having all died on the way.

During my stay I visited the packing establishment where fruit and vegetables are put up. I might almost say by the ton. The hacienda has great cement warehouses equipped with the most modern machinery for drying, preserving and canning. It has great buildings filled with tin plates made by the steel trust of the United States and brought here for the purpose. The cans are made in the factory by machines run by electricity and managed by Chilean men,

women and children. The peaches are peeled by a machine that does the work of 150 women, and all of the fruit and vegetables are cooked by steam in the cans. The factory can make 10,000 cans in a day, and it ships its product away by the carload.

Breed Special Fruit Trees.

In connection with the canning, I want to tell you about the vegetables and the fruit in the fields. I visited one section where ninety acres of vegetables were ready for the factory. There were great sections of ripe, red tomatoes, long rows of green beans and an enormous quantity of sweet corn. From there I went to the peach orchards, which now have 45,000 trees loaded with ripe fruit. The trees are 7 years old, and some of the peaches are as big as my fist, and of an exquisite flavor. Many of the vegetables have been created by Don Salvador, and in some of these he has succeeded in reducing the size of the stones to half that of the common peach of our country.

Salvador Another Burbank.

The orchards I saw have now about 100 pounds of fruit to the tree, and at this average Don Salvador estimates that he has 4,500,000 pounds of fruit, or at least 2,200 wagon loads. All of this is ripe and ready for canning. At five peaches to the pound he has 22,500,000 peaches, and he believes that they could all be landed in good shape in New York if fast cold storage steamers were ready to take them there via the Panama canal. Don Salvador tells me that such peaches can easily be carried that distance in cold storage, and still have four or five days in which to be marketed. These peaches are ripe here in the midst of our winter and they would surely bring a high price.

As I looked at this great orchard I could see that even now Chile could already supply a vast deal of fruit for our

winter markets. There are many big orchards. These people can do business in the large, and they understand all about scientific fruit growing. Don Salvador is perhaps the best among them, but there are many other fruit raisers who manage their plantations almost as well, and who, when the demand has been created, will devote themselves to raising fruit for us. Take the peach orchard of which I am writing. It is as clean and well kept as any I have ever seen in the United States. It is trimmed every year and the trees are cut low, so that the branches grow out from the ground. At the same time the limbs are thin, so that the sun gives a daily kiss to every peach on the tree, bringing a ripe, rosy blush to its cheeks. Around the trunk of each tree is a little ditch for irrigation, and sprinkled over this after watering is nitrate of soda, which is fed to the trees at the rate of 200 pounds to the acre. They have no San Jose scale here, but Don Salvador uses the lime and sulphur spray every winter to guard against insect pests of all kinds.

As we sat in Santa Lues, the great country house of the plantation, where Don Salvador lives during a part of the summer, I asked him to give me some idea of the possibilities of Chile as a winter fruit market for the United States. He replied: "There is no doubt that one of our

chief industries for the future is to be in raising fruit for the north. We shall soon be able to land fruit in New York in fourteen days after the ships leave Valparaiso, and with proper fruit steamers we can send such varieties as will bring the highest prices at a time when there is no other fruit to compete with them. At present you get some winter fruits from Australia and Cape Colony, but they are twenty-six days or more from New York, and you have to pay a freight upon them that is several times as much as the freight from Chile would cost. Tasmania and New Zealand have to pay from \$1.25 to \$1.50 freight on a box of fifty pounds of a bushel to the United States. If we could ship our fruit at half that price we would have an advantage of 17 cents per bushel. We expect to do a great deal better than that.

"The difference in distance would be a difference of thousands of miles. The Tasmanians, for instance, are now shipping fruit to Europe. They sold 1,000 boxes of apples there for \$5,000,000, and received therefrom something like \$5,000,000, Chile can raise as good apples as any part of the world, and we shall send our fruit north through the canal to Europe as well. It is said that we ought to be able to ship apples there at a freight rate of 50 or 60 cents a box or from \$12 to \$14 a ton."

"How about the nursery stock?"

"The could be supplied right here in Chile. I am ready to put my lands and nurseries at the disposal of any combination with large enough capital and ships to go into this business. I would do all that I could do to help and that not only for the sake of profit, but for the good of my country."

"Do you know of any syndicates who are considering this business?"

"I do not know absolutely of any plans that have been completed as to its organization and development. I know, however, that the United Fruit company has been considering the project and that there are other capitalists who could probably be induced to put money into it if they realized its great possibilities. The Chilean government would do all it could to encourage the traffic and do, I am sure, give rebates on the freights of the government railroads in carrying the fruits to the ports. In addition there will be no difficulty in raising considerable capital here. The profits can be easily demonstrated, and I look upon the inauguration of the business at an early date after our first ships go from here north to New York."

FRANK G. CARPENTER.



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