

OPENING ADDRESS

PRESIDENT WM. H. SALLMON

Chula Vista, Calif.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Let me first express the pleasure we feel in meeting in Santa Barbara, and under the roof of this famous old hotel. It is peculiarly fitting that we should meet in this section of the "Golden State," where so many experiments in the growing of avocados were tried, where several varieties have originated, and where so many successes in the culture of the fruit have been attained. Here some of the earliest plantings in the state were made. In 1871, the late Judge R. B. Ord brought three avocado seedlings from Mexico, two of which grew to be fine big trees, bearing good fruit. Here the first orchard of avocados planted in California was started by the late Kinton Stevens in Montecito in 1895, and here the late Joseph Sexton nurtured at his home in Goleta over ninety varieties of avocado trees representing types from Mexico, Guatemala, Hawaii, Florida and California, with the object of discovering the varieties best adapted to the conditions in this section. It is pleasurable and profitable to visit the place of beginnings and the pleasure and profit we derived from the dinner and lecture last evening are foretastes of what we expect from this meeting in Santa Barbara.

It has been the custom of the California Avocado Association to hold two meetings a year. The annual meeting at which business is transacted, directors elected, reports of secretary, treasurer and committees received, the annual address of the president delivered, and a get-together dinner with brief prepared speeches enjoyed has, by common consent, been held in Los Angeles or Pasadena in the spring. The semi-annual meeting with a set program but with no business transacted, no reports of officers or committees except one occasionally of very general interest like the report of the committee on varieties to be presented at this meeting, a dinner without speeches and an informal address by the president, is held in the fall. Such meetings, like this at Santa Barbara, have been held also at San Diego and Riverside. We are a young organization and it has been felt that the holding of two meetings a year helps to stimulate and maintain interest. Moreover, the exhibit of fruit which is such an attractive feature of our gatherings, gives an opportunity for the thin-skinned and the thick-skinned growers to show their wares at the respective seasons of ripening.

I wish to submit for your consideration a change in the order of things. The old order has served its purpose well. The two yearly meetings have brought us together in a fraternal way and we have threshed out our problems pretty thoroughly. Our annual reports are widely considered as compendiums on the history and culture of the avocado and we are dubbed as the most enthusiastic and progressive bunch of fruit growers in the state. But, ladies and gentlemen, I must reveal to you the secret that the holding of two meetings a year with set subjects and speeches is becoming a burden. We have

studied and discussed the entire range of operations from seed-time to harvest, and all that we know about the business is in print. There is very little additional information to add each six months and the selection of subjects and speakers to make two programs a-year is becoming increasingly difficult. I am giving you the experience of the leaders who are on the inside. They are using their time and spending their money freely to make this industry a success, but they realize that the range of discussion and the constituency upon which we have to draw are necessarily limited. If the fruit could be grown more widely the situation would be different, but since it is apparent that avocados in this country can be produced in quantities in small and favored sections of California and Florida only we must face the facts as they are and as they are likely to remain.

I wish to offer two suggestions, and the first is that the California Avocado Association ally itself with the State Fruit Growers and meet with that body in the fall. It seems to me that some of our difficulties would be solved by this move, and that there is much to gain and nothing to lose by such an alliance. This young organization would import strength and impart enthusiasm in that old body which holds its fifty-second annual meeting next month. These fruit growers represent all the horticultural interests of the state, and bring together in their annual meetings a large audience of growers and farmers, nurserymen and scientists, contact with whom would be most advantageous for us. There could be no more opportune field for our propaganda—using that word in its best and not its degraded meaning. Their published "Proceedings" shows that they give attention to most of the subjects which concern us like the soil and its cultivation, planting, budding, advertising, packing, shipping and control of diseases and pests. We could attend such of their sessions as interest us and also hold an open meeting with two or three addresses devoted to the avocado. In their proceedings for 1912 and 1914 find that such addresses were given by two of our charter members.

My second suggestion is that we interest ourselves in other semi-tropical fruits and vegetables, that we study them for the pleasure to be derived and the possible profit and also that we may add to the food production of the country. We have too many eggs in one basket in Southern California and they are chiefly oranges and lemons. In my district it is largely lemons, though it was demonstrated before the freeze that we could also grow good oranges and grape fruit. But there is also the loquat, the cherimoya and the chayote, the passion fruit, the mango and the feijoa, the date, the guava and the lime, some of which are already in a fair way to become commercially profitable. We could enlarge the range of our interest by dealing with these and other semi-tropicals at the fall meeting, while reserving the spring meeting exclusively for the avocado.

I would suggest that we be represented at the next convention of state fruit growers, and that these ideas be studied by the directors, and, if approved by them that they be presented to the members of our Association for discussion and action.