

good condition. The grower gains in the weight of the crop by this delay and the consumer receives a higher quality of fruit.<sup>25</sup>

Under California conditions for long distance shipment, the peaches are picked somewhat more immature than is desirable for local markets (fig. 13). At the packing house the peaches are graded and each individual fruit is wrapped and packed in standard California peach boxes. The packed fruit may be precooled and shipped in iced refrigerator cars to eastern markets.



Fig. 13.—Harvesting operations in a peach orchard. Pickers using metal picking pails which are emptied into lug boxes shown stacked in the row. Automobile trucks haul the lug boxes to the packing house, shipping point, or cannery.

*Drying Peaches.*—Peach drying is most extensively practiced in the Sacramento and San Joaquin valleys. Some peaches are dried in southern California; but few along the coast or in the foothills. Only firm yellow freestone varieties, principally the Muir, Lovell and Elberta, are dried commercially. In the San Joaquin Valley peach drying begins as early as July 15 with the Muir and continues into September with the Lovell. In the Sacramento Valley most of the peaches are dried during August. The drying ratio of Muir and Lovell varies from 4:1 to 6:1, while the Elberta will shrink from 6:1 to 8:1.

<sup>25</sup> Duruz, W. P. Harvesting and handling California peaches for eastern shipment. California Agr. Exp. Sta. Cir. 241:1-21. 1922.