

THE APIARY.

Experience in Beginning with Bees.

EDITOR "THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE":

As your valuable paper is a sure medium by which to get in touch with the average amateur in the bee-keeping art, it is my object to-day to give some information that will most likely be of some value to the beginner.

First of all, I personally know of several cases where a youngster on a farm got the bee-fever by being present at a neighbor's while he manipulated his colonies. This is a good way to get started in the business, especially if the neighbor is a successful beekeeper, operating with modern methods. In some cases he saw that there was something in the business, so perhaps spent his pocket money to buy a colony or sometimes a swarm. I also know of a case where a boy of sixteen brought home a stray swarm from the woods, one that had clustered on a small tree.

It is not my wish to discourage these young beekeepers, nay, rather do I try to encourage them to persevere if they don't meet with success immediately. One can get more knowledge by being present while an experienced hand operates on the colonies, in a few days than he can gain in a book in a whole year. But here is where a big mistake generally comes in. A book like the A B C and X Y Z of Beekeeping should be presented to the boy. It is impossible for a beekeeper to instruct such a beginner in every detail, and it is sometimes just such a simple detail that is omitted which brings on some trouble.

Let us assume that the expert has taught the boy the value of clipped queens and perhaps clipped the wings from the queen of the boy's colony himself, showing the boy how it is done. If in this case the beekeeper forgot to instruct the youngster, when it is to be done, damage might be done to the young queen of the new swarm, in fact she might be rendered worse than worthless. If in this case the boy hives the swarm by caging the old queen in front of the new hive, now on the old stand, as he was directed, he will be most likely delighted with his success, having doubled his property. To prevent an afterswarm (of which he was warned) from absconding he is quite likely to innocently open the hive with the young queen, hunt her up, and, as he does not know how and at what age queens mate, he clips the wings off the young sovereign, after which she is not in position to take her bridal flight, and lo, when the new brood hatches it will turn out all drones, and before the boy suspects the wrong serious damage is done. Of course, the neighbor will most likely be obliging enough and save the colony by killing the queen and replacing her by another. Most likely he will also suspect what caused the trouble and instruct the young beekeeper on the matter. More than a dozen such examples could be given on the subject. It is needless to say that more money was lost in the above case than would twice pay for a good bee book. If the amateur had it in his possession he would have, in nine out of ten cases, read the article on clipped queens, and all the trouble would have been avoided.

If bee diseases set in the case is still worse. Let us assume that foul brood makes its appearance. If only one colony is affected it starts to dwindle, and in all likelihood is robbed by the other stronger colonies. In a short time they also become affected and get weaker and weaker, and before the boy's suspicion is aroused the disease might have, for the same reason, spread over among the neighbor's colonies and given the busy man a lot of trouble. The way to detect foul brood and the cure for same is very simple and stated in the above-named book. Should the beginner suspect this disease he does best to send a sample of affected comb to the secretary of the Ontario Beekeepers' Association. He will get the best diagnosis and advice from there.

In another instance one or two colonies may scarcely survive the winter and trouble is sure to follow, as robbing will get quite under way before the boy suspects that everything is not right. If all these facts are taken well into consideration no person of average intelligence will doubt the value of a book on bee culture to the amateur.

The question often arises, when and how to take bees home and when not to. I would never advise a beginner to take bees home late in the fall, during the winter and not earlier in the spring than May 15. If weather promises to be fair and warm the next day one could take the risk of getting them home as early as the latter part of April or the beginning of May, but I would not advise the same. The reason for not taking them home late in the fall or in the winter is that if bees are disturbed they consume a greater amount of honey which, if they are not kept under most favorable condition, is very liable to cause dysentery which might be the death of the colony if no warm weather sets in so that the bees can have a cleansing flight some time after. I would not take them too early in the spring, as they are very liable to dwindle if disturbed at this time.

The best method is to move the bees home in comb-less packages and hive them immediately. If these are taken from a clustered swarm with their queen they are almost sure to stay in the hive where put; but if only shaken from combs they are very likely to return to their old hive if this is anywhere within a mile or so from their new premises. The best way then is to hive them in a few combs containing honey and carry them into a dark, cool place that is not too damp, and leave them there for a couple of days, after which it is fairly safe to place them outside. However, if they were taken from hives not very far from where they are to be placed they are likely to return even then.

If moved over a mile or several miles they will not return in any case; at least that is my experience. If a hive containing bees is to be moved over a mile or several miles it is reasonably safe to move them any time in the summer, but if near I would not try to do so as they are very likely to fly back to the old location. If only to be moved from a neighbor's not more than about one or two hundred yards they could be taken home in the fall as soon as cold weather set in, provided they are moved with little or no jar. When moving bees roughly over great distances it is best to cover them on top with a wire cloth, especially if the weather is at all warm. A piece of wire cloth should be tacked over the entrance also. By wire cloth is understood ordinary window screen.

Many beginners try to run for comb honey only, not caring to go to the expense of buying an extractor. In no case would I try to induce the beginner to do so if he could at all afford the expense of the extractor. Sometimes an obliging neighbor will lend his extractor for the little work an amateur has. The reasons why I advise against comb honey production by the beginner are several: First, strong colonies are necessary, and the beginner sometimes has not got them as strong as they ought to be. Secondly, swarming is ten times worse when using sections for comb honey than if full-depth extracting supers are used, and the young beekeeper has generally enough swarming to control when running for extracted honey. Thirdly, it is sometimes annoying to the beginner that bees simply refuse to work in comb honey supers in spite of what the young beekeeper does to induce them to do so. Sometimes they sit idly around in the hive. Lastly, I would not advise the beginner to run for comb honey because in the end it does not pay him to go to the trouble, although the price is a little higher. Comb honey is, as a rule, difficult to produce, and even if the beginner would be successful in his endeavor to make bees work on sections he would likely not be able to get smooth, white combs with all or nearly all cells capped over, and it is neatness that goes a long way in selling comb honey. If only run for home use neatness would not be so necessary, but nevertheless I would not advocate to the beginner to try to produce comb honey.

A beginner should get some idea about the business at an experienced beekeepers' yard, but, even if he thinks he could manage everything he should not forget the book; it is very likely to pay for itself the first season, even if he has only one colony.

Waterloo Co., Ont.

BEEKEEPER.

FARM BULLETIN.

The Soldier and the Farm.

EDITOR "THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE":

I was returning from our Capital one day not long ago, where I had been lobbying Parliament as a representative of the Provincial Farmers' Association, and fell in with a member of Parliament on the train. "Don't you think," said he, "that we are doing a splendid thing for the returned soldiers?" "What's that?" said I, assuming a look of childlike innocence though I knew what he was driving at. "Why this scheme of furnishing them with farms on easy terms. We'll get a lot of that wild, unproductive land broken up and made fertile, Canada will produce more and more, the cost of living will be lower and we will provide homes for our brave boys. The country will be benefited and the men will be benefited. When we get potatoes down to 20 cents a bushel, wheat to 50 cents a bushel and dairy products about half what they are now, then we can have prosperity." He stopped to get breath and note the effect on me. "Say," said I, "do you ever read the Farmer's Advocate?" "Why no, I'm no farmer." "Evidently not, but it's a shame you couldn't be for about two years one of the 90 per cent. 'root-hog-or-die' type. If you had that much experience in the real thing you would never have uttered such statements as you have just now. You belong to that awful class which Peter McArthur, in the Advocate, recently styled 'Punk Patriots.' "Why, what is a 'Punk Patriot'?" "It's a man who assumes a veneer of patriotism but who is filled up inside, where there should be a heart and soul, with a punky, decayed, mass of selfishness and greed. Oh, don't think you're lonely; there's a big army of you all over Canada! A great many of them have M. P., or M. P. P., after their names. Men who are so selfish that they cannot see farther than their own salaries and comforts. What spite have you people against those boys that after they have risked their lives, maimed themselves for life, undergone privations that you have never dreamed of, lived on those battlefields for months, a veritable Hell on earth, that when they return you should expect them to spend the rest of their lives grubbing for a bare living at the last calling any man with common sense would adopt of his own free will?"

"Why do you talk that way?" said he. "I understand you are a successful farmer and chose it of your own free will after having received a good education. Explain yourself." "Yes, I chose the life myself because I liked the outdoor work and I still like farming as a profession, and I have been moderately successful, but I want you to understand that if I had put the same amount of energy and planning and executive ability into any other calling under Heaven I would have been into many times as much money and have been a man worth millions of the run-down apology I am to-day. But your ignorance of, and indifference to the real conditions of farm life with its meagre living, its unfair treatment at the hands of our legislators and its unremitting and unpaid drudgery, are not what angers me most. It is your complacent gloating over the fact that when

these poor returned soldiers add their toil to the work of production it will be increased so that such fellows as you can live in greater luxury and the man who is tied to the farm and ground down to a smaller profit will have to grub harder to keep together soul and body. The farmer is the least independent man to-day. His own hired man is more independent for there are two or three farmers who want help for every man who will work on the farm. The most inefficient mechanics and laborers have protective unions. The farmer cannot set his price on what he sells nor on what he buys. The legislators of his country treat with indifference or ridicule his appeals for laws that would better his conditions. Take the actual facts. Who are on our farms to-day? Men who have spent a life time there and still could not, if they sold, realize enough from a life of hard toil to enable them to live without work; men who cannot sell their farms for near what they are worth; men who at their time of life know nothing of any other means of making a living. I venture to say that 75 per cent. of our farmers to-day, if offered a job that would give them a salary of \$800 per year and easy work, would give up farming at once. I will go farther and say that not more than ten per cent. of our young, unmarried men to-day on the farms are there through choice. Then why expect our soldiers to take up this life willingly?"

N. S.

R. J. MESSENGER.

Unfair Taxation.

EDITOR "THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE":

In view of the threatened food famine, and the consequent need of increased agricultural production, for several years to come, it is essential that farmers be better educated as to the real causes of the steady decline in agriculture for many years past. No disease can be safely cured until it is properly and truly diagnosed. Farmers know that agricultural production has for years been less profitable than other occupations, and many of them have found it actually unprofitable, when the amount of capital and labor required are taken into consideration. But this is merely a knowledge of the symptoms, and is not sufficient to enable them to successfully combat the disease. An expert diagnosis reveals the fact that unfair and excessive taxation is the main cause of rural depopulation and the consequent decline in production. Farmers do not know this; they do not know that agriculture is the only industry which is taxed under our fiscal policy, by which means our heaviest taxes are levied; they do not know that manufacturers of agricultural implements get part of their raw material duty free, and are given a refund of 99 per cent. of the duty paid on the balance; they do not know that the taxes they pay on farm machinery and implements alone amount to more than eight million dollars annually, while the taxes on building and fencing material, etc., amount to an equally large, or larger sum; they do not know that farming is the only occupation in which those taxes cannot be added to the cost of production and recovered by also adding to the selling price of the product. These and many other facts, very important to the successful carrying on of any business, are not known to farmers. It is not the fault of the farmers themselves that they do not know these things. They nearly all subscribe regularly to the daily and the weekly papers and to some of the agricultural journals, but none of these give them this information. The daily and big weekly papers do not give it because it might lead to the knowledge that these publishers get their presses and type-setting machines duty free and exempt from war tax; the little papers do not give it because the big papers do not; why the agricultural journals do not give it is hard to say. Nor is this important information contained in any of the thousands of bulletins, (mostly useless), which are sent out by Government Agricultural Departments. The official reports containing this kind of information are not sent to the farmers. It is not the desire of the politicians to inform the farmers along these lines—it might tend to take legislative control out of the hands of the combines which now handle Parliaments as they choose. Millions upon millions of the public funds, (most of which are contributed by the farmers themselves), are wasted annually in the farce of "educating" the farmers, and yet the very information most essential to their business, (or any line of business), is deliberately withheld. If increased production is necessary to the well being and salvation of our beloved country, better information as to the true conditions of our deplorable situation must be given, and given now before it is too late. Who will give it?

Lambton Co., Ont.

H. J. PETTYPIECE.

Corn Expert Appointed.

It has been announced that P. L. Fancher, a member of this year's graduating class of the O. A. C., has been appointed Corn Expert in Ontario. Mr. Fancher's home was in Lambton County.

Slim Outlook for Apples.

Reports received from country districts by the Fruit Branch at Toronto indicate a small apple crop in Ontario this year. Prince Edward county, at present, gives the best promises. Standard winter varieties, such as Spy, Baldwin, and Greenings, show very little bloom throughout the province.