

I answer "Yes" and "No" to both; although there may be an apparent contradiction in this, there is none in reality. Yes, apicultural inventions, or, if you please, improvements, are in demand. There never was, and never will be, a time in our history when some invention will not be needed to accomplish certain desired ends. We often hear it said, that, if some enterprising Yankee would get up an invention to accomplish so and so, he would make his fortune. Much has been said about the world not rewarding inventors. There is no doubt some foundation for this, but there is more ado made about it than the facts warrant. The world at large is looking for and ready to reward some Edison, some Westinghouse, some Watt, some Ericson or Gutenberg to invent or discover any device or process whereby certain economic ends may be accomplished. As I have already intimated, our industry is one of the old ones. Since we have had a Langstroth, a Quinby, a Hrushka and a Mehring, we cannot expect to make any startling innovations, but there is a big field yet for improvements. Well, if apicultural inventions, or, if you please, apicultural improvements, are in demand, what are one or two of them, for example? As to implements, I would suggest that we need a good reversible extractor that shall not be too large or cumbersome. Whether such a one can be obtained is a question. Again we need some method whereby all bee-keepers can prevent swarming, and yet not interfere with the honey crop. There are several ways of preventing it, but none that seemed generally accepted or adopted. These are but two and I might suggest others, but I will sum all the rest of the needed inventions in this: we want inventions or new methods whereby we can produce better and more honey, and do it more cheaply. We have seen that during poor seasons, it is a difficult matter to raise the price of honey in proportion to its scarcity. What we must have, then, is cheaper production. Possibly what we need is fewer fixtures and fewer inventions, and more economy in labor and time. If that is the case the field for improvement is more in method than in the invention of devices. I have shown that inventions are in demand, I now propose to touch on the other side of the question, namely that they are in excess. Some inventions are like some men—it were better that they had never been born. Many of the so-called inventions have been a positive curse to our industry. Beginners and over enthusiastic bee-keepers have adopted them at a large expense only to find that they were a delusion and a snare, and too late they discover that they just

have tried a few to see whether that number justified the adoption of a larger number. In my travels recently among the bee-keepers I ran across three or four who, having been over enthusiastic in regard to the merits of a certain hive, had made and put into operation anywhere from fifty to five hundred. They had carefully tried them and found them wanting; and at the time of my visit I found the hives stacked up by themselves as it were a monument of apicultural foolishness, and their authors well nigh discouraged. Of course they argued that bees did not pay very well, and had come to the general conclusion that the hives recommended by Quinby and Langstroth were best after all. These are by no means isolated cases. I hear of it through correspondence too frequently. It behooves editors, then, to be careful what they recommend or place before the public. Perhaps it would not be too sweeping to assert that about nine-tenths of the apicultural inventions are absolutely useless. They are a damage to the poor people who are duped by them, and a positive loss in them to the inventor. Impractical inventions, as a rule, are dreamed out by impractical men, and it were better that they never appear in the pages of a bee journal.

A good many things that we younger ones think we have discovered, were years ago mentioned and described by father Langstroth and father Quinby. The most I think we can expect to do is to improve upon some old method or device. While I would not discourage inventors I would certainly warn the novice against wasting too much time in trying to get up something that will be vastly superior to anything else ever thought of or dreamed of by the fathers of apiculture. There is just one thing more I would like to speak of, although it is a little foreign to the treatment of the subject as above and that is, a sort of jealousy among some of our apicultural inventors as to who first originated or devised this or that thing. The priority of claim rests not with either of the disputants, as a general thing, but some poor obscure bee-keeper who does not care who has the credit of the idea, so long as he and his bee-keeping friends are benefited. He is not going to lie awake nights worrying over it anyhow. I speak of this because I have seen a little undercurrent in some private correspondence that passed through my hands, and as long as the idea is simply an improvement upon an old method, and not legitimately an invention, what matters it who has the credit? If we are jealous at all, let us be jealous for each other—jealous that some one else have the honor rather than we.

ERNEST R. ROOT.