

Notes and Comments

(By J. L. Byer)

You ask the question, Mr. Editor (page 247): "Are bees a nuisance to our neighbors?" I will make bold to reply, Yes, **some** bee-keepers' bees are a nuisance to neighbors. A number of bee-keepers that the writer is well acquainted with keep bees in towns and villages, and I have reason to believe that in the majority of cases the bees are so managed as to cause but little annoyance to people living in close proximity to the apiaries. On the other hand, I know of a few cases where a whole lot of annoyance is caused by reason of cross bees and careless management. This being the case, I cannot see how any one case can establish a definite ruling as a precedent for a magistrate to follow in trying a case like the one you refer to. By way of illustration, suppose that the magistrate decides, by the evidence submitted, that Mr. A's bees are not a nuisance; later on Mr. C, who has very cross bees, and who is very careless in his management of them, is accused by a neighbor of keeping a nuisance. If the evidence shows clearly that the accusation is well-founded, it would be absurd to expect the same decision as in the case of Mr.

This is written in a general way, without any knowledge pro or con relative to the specific case you have mentioned, and from what I would infer at this distance, bees as kept by Mr. Bay-benevolent factors would not be a nuisance. However, I firmly maintain that bees sometimes are a nuisance, and it is only fair that I view the subject in an impartial way, and individually as bee-keepers see that "do as we would wish to be done by." Let me whisper that with the bees I have (probably no crosser than any other), money wouldn't tempt me to put up a large apiary in a thickly-populated place.

For various reasons I have never used bee-escapes in taking off honey. Even if my hives were all uniform, and all other conditions favorable for their use, I fail to see so much advantage as has been claimed by those who use them. It has been said in their favor that their use avoids the robbing incidental to taking honey off the hives after the flow is over. While this is true to a certain extent, the honey often taken off with escapes, unless the day is very hot, cannot be extracted until the combs are warmed up. Unless one has some sort of a hive lifter, the putting on of the escapes is no small matter, and the cost of a large number of escapes is worth taking into consideration. Again there need be but little robbing when taking off the honey if proper precautions are taken; at least, that has been the case in our yards. The greater half of our honey was to extract after the flow was over this year, and in three days we took off 2,500, 1,800 and 2,100 pounds, respectively. No wet combs were put back till evening, a cloth was put over the comb box when going back and forth; in short, care was taken to see that the bees did not get a taste of honey. As a result, not a bit of robbing was started, and our extracting house was anything but bee-tight. In the evening the wet combs were put back and next morning everything was quiet.

Let me digress to say something re a day's work in extracting. Have never made any big record in that line, as our extractors are old style, and never more than three helpers have been employed at once. But the evening after taking off the 2,500 pounds all three were tired. The writer took all honey from the hives, a brother ran the extractor, and Mrs. B took off the cappings. Not "every inch capped," but from the cappings nearly 200 pounds of honey dripped out. Not a big day's work, by any means, yet we three felt like saying: "Plenty, thanks—until to-morrow."