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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

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Honey Production in British Columbia

INSTITUTE 891

SEASONS OF 1913-1914

By F. DUNDAS TODD, FOUL-BROOD INSPECTOR.



In the month of October, 1914, there were listed on the records of the Department of Agriculture the names of 466 bee-keepers in the Province, and it is estimated that there are probably about 200 more with whom the Bee Inspectors have failed to get into touch. From all known bee-keepers there was requested a honey-crop report for the years 1913 and 1914, and 385 kindly responded. Briefly stated, we get the following results:—

	Colonies in April.	Crop in Pounds.	Average per Hive.
1913	1,191	37,782	31.7
1914	2,137	117,275	54.8

If we assume that those reporting are fairly representative bee-keepers, then a little calculation will show that the total honey-crop of the Province in 1913 was probably about 50 tons, and in 1914 from 150 to 200 tons.

Four years ago there was fairly unanimous agreement among the bee-keepers visited by the Inspectors that British Columbia was a rather poor bee country. Let us take the reports and learn what light they throw on the subject.

First, let it be said that a country is considered a good one for bees when a skilled bee-keeper can depend upon a crop of 50 lb. a hive, one year with another. The year 1913 was considered by many to be the worst season for twenty years in British Columbia; 1914 was deemed above the average, so we have the extremes of good and bad. As a sample of what constitutes a poor year elsewhere, one may refer to the Province of Ontario, where skilled bee-keepers report an average of 10 lb. a hive in 1914.

Now, we have very few skilled bee-keepers in British Columbia, yet the reports indicate an average crop of over 31 lb. a hive in 1913. If we select out of the reports the apiaries reporting 31 lb. a hive or over, we will find that fifty-six bee-keepers with 525 colonies produced 27,832 lb. of honey, or an average of 53 lb. to the hive, while 329 bee-keepers owning 666 hives produced 9,950 lb., an average of 15 lb. to the hive. It begins to look as if a very poor season in British Columbia would be called a good season anywhere else.

Examining the figures for 1914 in the same way, we find ninety-three bee-keepers who report an average production above 60 lb. They owned a total of 778 colonies and raised 65,352 lb. of honey, being an average of 84 lb. On the other hand, 292 bee-keepers owning 1,359 colonies produced 38,824 lb., being an average of 29 lb. per hive.