

Mr. Todd keeps bees himself, and since he has been living in Victoria has found out many things of interest about the local conditions. He is still engaged in the work, and after he has visited the whole of the province and conducted more experiments he hopes to be in a position to give reliable information in regard to what can be done here in the way of keeping bees for profit.

During his visit to Duncan, Mr. Todd found that disaster had overtaken the bee colonies last year. The season was a barren one so far as honey was concerned, all through the western part of North America, Vancouver Island suffered along with the rest, but the beekeepers who thoroughly understood the business were able to avert disaster. At Cowichan, however, the people did not know, and the result was that out of 77 colonies kept in the neighborhood only three are left. There are nothing but empty hives, where a little knowledge would have kept the bees alive and they would now have been ready to commence the season's work.

The cause of the disaster was the efforts of the bees to make up for the lack of honey. When they found that the nectaries of the flowers were dry they set about gathering the honeydew secreted by the aphids. This was stored away in the combs, and when consumed during the winter brought on an attack of dysentery which resulted disastrously. Had the keepers known they would have taken out the combs containing the honeydew and fed pure sugar syrup in its place, giving the bees back the honeydew in the spring when they were able to exercise and not suffer ill effects from its consumption. The loss from dysentery in the Duncan district last year Mr. Todd estimates at \$1,240. The loss will not only be to the keepers of bees but will have a bad effect on the fruit crop, as there will be no bees to pollenize the flowers. This is the first time in the history of bee-keeping at Duncan when this has happened.

It has been generally thought that the honey gathered in this district was taken from the clover blossoms. This Mr. Todd has proved is only partly correct for the greater part of the honey is taken from the flower of the snowberry, which is very common here. The honey obtained in this way is of very good quality. At Pender Island, however, Mr. Todd found very good quality clover honey.

Mr. Todd leaves next week on a lecturing tour through the Mainland districts.—Victoria Times.

Mr. E. F. Robinson, of Victoria, B. C., comments on the above as follows:

Sir,—I notice a statement in the Times of the 5th inst., made by Mr. Todd, who is posing as an authority on bee culture, that the gross income from honey production in B. C. is in the neighborhood of \$100,000 per annum. Such statements instead of furthering the good intentions of the government to foster the bee industry in B. C. are detrimental in the extreme. They induce many people to go into bee-keeping with expectations quite beyond possibilities, bringing disappointment and failure to themselves and discredit to the Department of Agriculture.

A few facts may help to show the utter unsoundness of Mr. Todd's statements:

The Ontario Bee-Keepers' Association (of which I have been a member) collect information from their members each year for years, as to the number of colonies kept, and yield of honey, so as to test the price for the season.

In 1909 the yield from 15,000 colonies was 885,000 lbs., or an average of 59 lbs. per hive, an increase of one pound per hive over 1908. This at 11 cents per pound, the wholesale price in Ontario, amounts to \$97,350.

Ontario is a good country for bee-keeping, the average yield per hive is high, yet falls short of Mr. Todd's figures for British Columbia, and where in B. C., I may ask Mr. Todd, can he find 15,000 colonies of bees, especially as his experience, previous to the last two weeks, has

been confined to Victoria and for two years only.

During my seventeen years in Victoria I have become well acquainted with most of the honey producers. I am sure I am well within the mark when I say there are not over 400 colonies on Vancouver Island. The best locations, in a fair season, yield about 35 lbs. per colony. The price per pound wholesale, would be about \$2,100. On these figures Mr. Todd base his estimate knows nothing of the main cause not having visited the B. C.

Mr. Todd tells us that the winter losses were 74 colonies, three colonies of bees only in that district, which loss is due to the bees storing honey during the winter of 1908-9, the cause down to a dearth of

When an expert is in doubt of everyday questions, what can the inexperienced?

As honey dew (secretions of insects) is with us most abundant, according to Mr. Todd, almost impossible to keep bees on Vancouver Island because of

Mr. Todd need not despair, as he has his practical experience for he writes over his own signature all he knows of practical bee-keeping could be written on the back of a card," and he is to be commended for his open candor.

Successful bee-keeping requires a natural aptitude to the work. With these qualifications it is one of the most interesting and profitable branches of rural occupation.

E. F. ROBINSON

Victoria, B. C.