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CANADA FOR THE BEE-KEEPER

By Dr. C. Gordon Hewitt.

There have been many signs during the last few years that bee-keeping in Canada is receiving greater consideration than previously. Notwithstanding such favourable signs there still exists a large proportion, too large by far, of farmers, fruit growers and others who do not realize the importance of the presence of bees on the farm, on the ranch and in the garden, and the value of their products. There are others who, although they may not be aware of the fact that bees are valuable adjuncts to the farm and orchard, nevertheless would keep bees if they knew how to begin and continue. This fact is clearly indicated by the large number of letters which are continually being received, the essence of most of which is as follows: "I should like to keep bees and should be pleased if you would tell me how to begin and what to do." This bulletin has for its chief object the answering of these questions. It is not intended to be an exhaustive account of apiculture or of bees, but a guide to those whose knowledge of bee-keeping is limited or who have no previous knowledge of this profitable branch of agriculture. Not only has it been written as a guide to the beginner but also with the desire to increase the number of bee-keepers in different parts of Canada by indicating the advantages of bee-keeping and thereby wakening the interest of farmers and fruit-growers to its advantages.

Briefly, the advantages of bee-keeping

are as follows: Bees produce an article which is of value as food for the owner and his family or as a saleable product and in the gathering of the nectar from the flowers they increase the yield of the crop whether it be clover or apples. Honey is valuable as an article of food and there is always a good market for it. The fertilizing value of bees in relation to flowers will be discussed later, but it should be remarked here that in many localities alsike clover is a total failure and hardly worth cutting owing to its seedless condition brought about by an absence of bees which alone fertilize the flowers. All fruit growers know that certain cross-varieties of apples, plums and other fruits will not produce unless they are cross-fertilized. In such cross-fertilization bees are the most important agents. The presence of bees, therefore, in an orchard undoubtedly increases the amount of fruit produced and this has been experimentally proved. It will be readily understood that a few hives of bees form an important and, we should think, an almost necessary adjunct to the orchard. Few people realize the enormous waste of nectar which takes place annually and which might be gathered, or appreciate the amount of clover seed and fruit which is lost each year owing to lack of bees to fertilize the flowers. Hence such a waste and loss continues. Canada is incomparable in its wealth of wild and honey producing flowers which give so great a charm to the landscape and yet their fragrance is wasted and they solicit in vain the visits of the bees.

Apart from the importance of keeping bees to ensure the fertilization of flowers,

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