

# A BRITISH BEE-KEEPER ON THE ONTARIO HONEY EXHIBITS AT S. KENSINGTON.

*To the fraternity of Canadian Bee-keepers, greeting.*

**W**ILL you allow me to congratulate you as brother bee-keepers, on the success of your Ontario Honey Exhibits at South Kensington. I am in no way in the secrets of your representatives, but simply state the result of my own personal observation. I have seen the exhibit several times, some of them unrecognised by those in charge, but at others I have enjoyed a chat with some or all of them. It is my happiness to number Messrs Jones, Corneil and Mr. McKnight amongst my personal friends. To open my photo album and meet their gaze will in the future recall hours of real pleasure and instruction, and I hope the past few weeks has only commenced a friendship that shall increase with increasing days and years.

Your idea of a honey exhibit was a happy one to commence with, and worthy of the success it has realized. No other colony of our "Greater Britain" made any attempt to give us any idea of their honey resources, some of which are by no means to be despised even by Canada. They simply sent us a sample of honey to remind us they grew flowers and those flowers secreted nectar and were apparently therewith content. But you not only conceived the idea but gave it practical shape worthy of the greatness of bee-keeping as a national industry amongst you.

As success is always the great test of efficiency your packing arrangements were a marked success, the honey all arriving in such splendid condition after its long voyage and various transshipments. Much of this must have been due to the care taken by those in charge. Dock porters are careless and railway men are proverbially "smashers" but your goods underwent the ordeal of "handling" by all these tormentors of bee-keepers and came through successfully.

In the matter of space, you might have wished to have been better served, but it is and was too much to hope the commissioners would do better for you. You could scarce expect them to keep an empty building in the very centre of the exhibition for four months that you might use it for two only, consequently, you were fixed away at one end of the great show, out of the line of the main throng of visitors, amongst the quartz crushers and gold mines. But judicious advertisements made up in great measure for deficient facilities, and the honey house was visited by many tens of thousands of people.

Then again, your representatives, although all good men, were all strangers to London, and the inborn whims and prejudices of Englishmen. It speaks well for their ready tact, as witnessed by

the ready way in which they settled down to the business as if they had been shop-keepers from infancy. They taught us a lesson, to commence, by putting up their honey in such small parcels and thus bringing it within the pocket of the poorest visitor to the show.

Their next difficulty, I judge, was to keep check on their saleswomen. From the very nature of the goods and mode of disposal, this could only be done by the most vigilant supervision; it was not possible to place so many lbs. in the hands of one saleswoman and get her to render an account at certain intervals, consequently, those in charge had always to be on the spot and with their eyes open. If you, whose goods they have been disposing of, will kindly, for one moment, realize what it means to men accustomed to the free air of heaven, to be stuck in a building from 10 a.m. to 10 or 11 p.m. day after day, giving information, negotiating sales and taking cash, and, all the while, kind friends continually trying to beguile them into runs into the country and to sight seeing, you will say you have indeed been well served. I have myself lived a good spell of my short life in London and after the first novelty of the sight has worn off there is nothing so wearying to my spirits as a London crowd.

Towards the end, the fogs and mists must have been most trying. Honey at best is delicate stuff to handle and I know few things that deteriorate so rapidly. After the show had closed, their difficulties must have increased instead of lessened. It is only those that have tried can imagine one half the difficulties that beset a traveller seeking to dispose of goods in London. "Unless he knows town well," means not only that he must know every street, lane and merchant, but that he knows how to approach and get the gentleman that sits in his counting-house to listen while you explain your wares to him.

On your side of the great water, you are always anxious to see the last new thing, while we on the contrary are all prejudiced against it. Then, again, the most ready purchaser is probably the man with a balance the wrong side at his bankers. Our great city can boast of her fair share of insolvents although her boards of wealth are matchless, and I can picture the woe begone faces of many of you whose honey was not raised by "pumping it out of a well," if they had returned to you with a margin of 25 per cent of bad debts. Probably this is so, it is not impossible, and the bare thought of its possibility will only make you appreciate their labors the more if they have been so fortunate as to avoid that quicksand.

Another and by no means insignificant difficulty was the fact that British honey has been well