

Michigan State Bee-Keepers'
Convention.

25TH ANNUAL CONVENTION.

THE above convention was held at the Normandie House, Detroit, Mich., opening January 1st, 1891, at 9 a.m. The president, Prof. A. J. Cook, in the chair. A communication was read from the secretary, H. D. Cutting, in reference to the honey exhibit at Chicago Fair, advising that each state make a honey exhibit separately, under a representative appointed for the purpose.

In the absence of the secretary, the assistant secretary was appointed secretary.

The reception of annual dues followed, resulting in a membership before the close consisting of about thirty-eight.

The following committees were then appointed:

Exhibits—Dr. A. B. Mason, Messrs. Truck and R. D. Parker.

Resolutions—Byron Walker, A. W. Fisher and B. Knight.

Columbian Exhibit—M. H. Hunt, A. I. Root and R. F. Holtermann.

Legislation—Hon. R. L. Taylor, W. Z. Hutchinson, Geo. E. Hilton.

The subject, "Best method of rearing queens," came next on the programme. Mr. Hutchinson being absent, it was opened by Mr. Heddon, the following paper being handed in later:

"THE BEST ALL-PURPOSE QUEENS, AND THE BEST METHOD OF REARING THEM."

This is the topic that has been assigned me by the secretary. I have wondered quite a little why he used the words "all-purpose." I supposed queens were all for one purpose—that of laying eggs. I don't suppose we would rear them any differently if we were to have their offspring engage in storing extracted honey than we would if their progeny are to be engaged in the production of comb honey. If we were to engage in rearing bees or queens for sale, I suppose that we would not attempt to rear queens differently in order to endow them with different qualities. In the premium lists of fairs I have seen premiums offered on an "all-purpose" bee hive, that is, all things considered, a hive that is the best adapted for raising either comb or extracted honey, or for either cellar or outdoor wintering. I can see how these words—"all-purpose"—might be applied to a hive, but

when applied to a queen bee they lose their meaning.

I might say in passing that I am opposed to an all-purpose *anything*, whether it is a queen bee, bee hive or a new milk cow. These combined all-purpose articles must succumb to the special purpose machine.

While I have criticised the use of the words "all-purpose" as applied to queens, I am willing to admit that much of our success centers in the queens. Of the factors under our control that go to make up our success, I think location, hives, combs and management are fully as important as the queen. We need queens that are sufficiently prolific to fill the combs of an ordinary brood nest in the early part of the season. Many plead for extraordinary prolificness as a very desirable quality in a queen. If queens were expensive—cost even \$1.00 each—there might be some excuse for desiring prolificness in a queen, but as they are ordinarily reared by the bees when left to do the work themselves, they practically cost nothing, and there is no excuse for not having enough of them—so that there will be no need of "horse-whipping" them, as Mr. Heddon puts it.

As to the rearing of queens, I know of no better way for the honey producer than that of simply allowing the bees to follow their own instincts. Young queens—those under two years of age—usually are the most desirable. They begin laying earlier, fill their combs more completely, and bring their colonies out in a more populous condition at the beginning of the white honey harvest. There is less disposition to swarming with young queens, and the same may be said in regard to the building of drone comb, if swarming occurs and foundation is not furnished. As to the rearing of queens artificially, so to speak, we should strive to secure the same conditions under which they are reared naturally. There must be warmth, food in abundance, plenty of nurse bees, and nothing but eggs or just-hatched larvae for the bees to develop into queens. As to the details of commercial queen-rearing, each breeder is a law unto himself, and I think I have now said enough to start the discussion upon "The best all-purpose queens, and how to rear them."

W. Z. HUTCHINSON.

A. I. Root.—Mentioned that as to best bees, they sell bees and queens rather than produce honey as the demand for queens was so great, but in his experience in the past the Italians had been best; sometimes the hybrids appear to have done better. The majority of bee-keepers appear to let things