



Bees and Money.

OFFICERS OF THE ONTARIO BEE-KEEPERS' ASSOCIATION.

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Communications on the business of the association, and bee-keepers' department of the CANADIAN FARMER to be addressed to the Secretary-Treasurer, 251 Parliament St., Toronto.

ED. CANADIAN FARMER.—I have read with some interest the proceedings at the meeting of the Executive Committee of the Ontario Bee-Keepers Association recently held in Toronto, as published in your last issue, and was not a little surprised to learn that foul brood was sufficiently prevalent in Ontario to necessitate legislation for its suppression. If this malady be so common as to require special legislation to stamp it out, I fancy we would have heard more of its ravages in the past than we have. From the report of this meeting, however, it is evident that our brethren who attended it are deeply impressed with the necessity of employing vigorous means to effect its extermination. To this end they propose special legislation. The bill is already drafted and only requires passage through the legislature and sanction by the representative of the Crown—then good bye foul brood. On reading the report of this meeting I asked myself the question, "what next?" Will the poultry association seek legislation for the suppression of "gapes" in chickens? or the dairymen's association press through a bill for lessening the frequency of abortion in their herds of Shorthorns? It is alleged that both these are contagious. Then why not remove them by act of parliament as our good friends of the committee are about to kill off foul brood. Well, we have already a law on the statute book for the suppression of the yellows in peaches and the black knot in plum trees, upon which the "foul brood bill" is modelled, still the yellows in peaches are as bad as ever; and the black knot a great deal worse than it was a few years ago. We have a law too for the extermination of Canada thistles, yet Canada thistles abound. We have also a law for relieving teamsters from the necessity of turning out in the snow by compelling them to make a double sleigh track in winter, yet most of us are compelled to divide the track when we go sleigh riding, and I venture to predict that when this foul brood bill becomes law, if it ever does, it will be found as inoperative and as impracticable as the laws I have cited. Laws that are inoperative had better never be passed, and I think the proposed law is one of them. Then it has in itself a provision that will unquestionably bar its progress through parliament if it does not ensure its being thrown out by the committee. It provides for a grant of public money to be paid to an inspector who is to be the nominee of the association, a body that has no corporate exist-

ance or legal status; to ask the legislature to sanction a grant under such conditions is to presume too far upon the generosity of its members and to assume that they are possessed of a degree of simplicity not over creditable, and that they are not likely by their acts to acknowledge. I apprehend that the advice Mowat gave the delegation that waited upon him to press this grant "seek further information as to what has been done by other legislatures in this matter" was the outcome of a gentlemanly way the Attorney-General has of dismissing those who make unreasonable demands upon him. Not till the Association becomes incorporated can it expect to secure a grant from the government for this or any other purpose. DRONE.

PROGRESS IN BEE CULTURE

Brother bee-keepers and friends: As I have been requested by a number of bee-keepers to contribute something on this occasion, I wish to say that I am always interested in anything pertaining to bee-keeping, and ever ready to contribute my mite in the way of promoting this noble cause. As we are here to-day to discuss the different modes of procedure in caring for our bees, let us do so with kind and unselfish motives. I am aware that I shall call out some criticisms, but if we all thought alike where would the thousand improvements be to-day, that are with us? Who would have believed before foundation was tried that such a wonderful result would have followed? But we may go still further back to the movable frame. If then, any one of this gathering had told us that he could take a hive all apart and move the bees all about on frames, could discover any defect and could change frames of comb from hive to hive, I ask, what would he have met? It would have been looked upon with as much doubt as the inventor of the mowing machine encountered; but all these ideas have proved to be actual facts. And the question arises have we reached the upper step of improvement and invention? I feel safe in saying we have not.

There was at one time a great hindrance to our progress, and that was the different patents. Although we owe our brother Langstroth a score of thanks for his labor and for his patent, yet it is plain that a few patents were spread over the country that were a hindrance to progressive bee-culture. But happily nearly all of these have gone out of use, and we are out of a land of bondage. Doubtless there are those present who have had sad experience with some of these patents. How absurd to think of success with a hive without division boards; with the whole upper storey and cover solid; with closed top bars nearly their whole length, and frames fitting close to stays at their sides, to be ever fastened by the bees, proving, when removed to be regular bee and queen killers. But says one, I use such hives, and I obtain honey. So you may, my friend, and you can get it using a box hive or a barrel or almost anything; and so we can cut our hay with a hand sythe, but how much easier and faster is hay obtained with the mower! Often I have heard the let alone plan advised, but after seeing what can be done with correct management, some will venture to try their hand at this.

I call to mind one particular case. I was transferring a colony from a box hive when a near neighbor called and stated

that he had a wonderful stock of bees that he had just bought for the small sum of ten dollars in the old Kidder hive. I asked how many frames there were; he did not know, but guessed it was full, at any rate it was a big hive and the party of whom he bought stated that they did wonders the previous season. He thought it was all folly to go to the expense of my arrangement, but the sequel showed him his mistake. While the transferred bees made a splendid return in surplus honey and swarms, his did nothing. I had occasion to visit this party with the improved arrangement, and while there this old neighbor came down, and looking rather down in the mouth, asked me to go and see if I could discover the cause of his bees acting as they did. He had just removed from the cellar and they appeared rather weak; he also said they acted strangely all the previous summer. They would dart around and act as if dissatisfied with their home. I suggested that they might be troubled with moths. Can't you go and see then, I said he. Have you not opened them? I asked. Oh no, they would sting me to death. I was in a hurry; however, I went over, and after digging and prying a long time, I succeeded in removing the old honey board, when about as many worms, as bees, appeared to view. The queen tried hard to locate and start a brood in several places in that large hive, but the moths had driven them every time and they were reduced to about a pint of bees. I knew of course, he could do nothing for them and the shortest cut seemed to be to fit the hive so as to take the Langstroth frame, which was done, and single division boards put in. With care I got comb enough from the old hive to fill two of these frames. They were packed with chaff and cloth, paper and chaff put over them. I directed him how to manage them, and to his surprise that little nucleus gave him two swarms and a good amount of surplus honey. He now handles his bees and knows just their condition at all times, and says guess work cannot be depended upon. I give this to illustrate by one case, the condition of thousands.

It is a positive fact that no occupation will be useless properly attended to in all its minor points, and bee-keeping is no exception. Unless one loves the bees and intends to study them, he may as well give them a severe letting alone; but on the other hand, if he will only make his bees a study, as he does all his other work, he will find much amusement and some profit in it. So much for improved fixtures and hives, now a few words regarding the bees themselves.

At the present time there is great diversity of opinion as to what strains of bees are preferable. One says if we want bees to sell we need the pure Italians, but if for business, the Hybrids are just as good; while another says he wants the long, leather colored Italians. I have thought an Italian was yellow at any rate, if pure, because we are told the three bands are a test of purity. Still the best imported queens are dark; in fact, I don't believe that all queens from good stock are perfect any more than that the progeny of other stock of any sort will be blessed with perfect qualities, every time. I don't believe we can produce queens whose bees will be smart workers, etc., if we breed and mate queens from the same hive. And this is my reason for favoring Hybrids, or at least one reason. It is a fact that we

can do double the amount of extracting from Hybrids (or black bees) that we can from Italians, and they are not quite so fond of their younger brothers and sisters, so they will leave the brood nests and take to the sections a little freer than the Italians. But when we come to the manipulation of the hives, the Italians are far preferable. One will notice this very readily if he has occasion to extract from a variety. He will see also how much more work it is to get the Italians off the combs, besides, he will see hundreds of Italians scattered all about the hive, while with the others nearly all will be inside. I don't speak of this to condemn the Italians, for I like their gentleness very much, but I intend to keep on the right side of my bees, or in other words I intend to be master at the start, the same as I would with a horse or any other creature that possesses a cross disposition. I do earnestly say, don't drop the Italians, but keep the best, and guard against in-and-in breeding as far as is within your power, and I believe perfection will be reached in time.

I think the hive we use has much to do with the disposition of bees. I have tried nearly all sorts of hives, and I say now, as I have often said before, that the two-storey chaff hive is the best, but I can honestly say that I never saw one that I could manipulate as easily as the one I have invented. All know the difficulty there is in removing section cases from a hive whose upper storey is permanent, because the frames are glued fast to them, and there is no possible way to pry them loose. However, we were glad to use such, because they really were so much superior to a single-walled hive. Now with the one spoken of, all such difficulties are overcome, because we have access to the ends of frames; and another important point is, we can remove a whole set of frames from the upper storey at once, in other hives we must take the time of removing only one frame at a time. I said the hive has much to do with the disposition of bees. Let us begin on a hive where we cannot pry the case from the frames and see now the bees will get aroused by the time we lift up a few frames which are adhering to the case we are lifting. Robbers smell the rat, and not a few are calling to seek what they may devour, and perhaps a queen is killed or a valuable comb or two smashed.

By the time the bee-keeper says: I don't want any more chaff hives. Now, my idea is, a chaff hive every time. And here let me say, it has been a hard study with me for a long time to perfect my hives, and as there is no patent on it, I hope not to be called selfish, at least. I believe it of much account to pack and cover with some coarse material, as hay or chaff, as a shade and also to keep it warmer in winter, and again, to press down the enameled cloth or quilt which may be over the upper story. The entrance to my hives the wind will not blow away, and thus by the means of affecting the disposition of the bees by allowing robbers to enter to enrage them. These are a few of the reasons why the hive has much to do with the kindness of the bees.

And let the hive be what it may I prefer: one that the frames are level with the top of the hive so that in removing cases we can press a knife or chisel directly between them and the frames. I want the hives so constructed that when the division boards are in place there will be no possible exit for the bees aside, of course, from the entrance.