

## WAX CRAFT.

## Ontario Bee-Keepers Convention.

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Beeswax, we know, is a mysterious substance secreted by the bees and not gathered, as our forefathers used to think. We cannot understand the process any more than we can understand how the spider spins his web. Wax is a product from the body of the bee. We find if we look through ancient history and along through the medieval ages wax was known in a commercial way. Bees wax, I believe, was of much larger production many years ago than now, but modern methods of bee-keeping explain this. Mention of the use of wax in the fine arts was made away back as far as the second or third century. We find also that the ancients had a knowledge of the art of making wax flowers from beeswax; it was rolled out in thin sheets.

Beeswax to-day comes into competition with many other waxes. I think paraffin and ceresin are most largely used for the adulteration of beeswax. While wax is simply a by-product and does not secure nearly the same attention in production as honey does, yet the great packing houses of Chicago and other places pay their dividends to the stockholders from the by-products—things formerly wasted. I have been impressed with the fact, in the last two or three years, especially as to the enormous waste of beeswax in the country. I would not be capable of making even an estimate of the thousands of dollars of wax wasted in Ontario every year, without going outside of the province, and this condition, to say the least, is poor economy. And it is well to remember that while beeswax comes into competition with a number of inferior waxes—I use the term guardedly—it seems to me that the use of beeswax is increasing all the time, and there are calls for beeswax in the last few years in certain lines that in other years I hadn't the faintest

idea it was used for. For the last three years I myself have supplied beeswax to a firm that makes a special line of paper. I know another bee-keeper who is supplying exclusively a firm of engravers with wax for silver plating and work like that, and they are particular as to the kind of wax they get, as to its purity, as to how it is rendered and so on.

The extracted honey producer is more largely interested in the line of wax production than the comb honey producer, because the comb honey producer does not have cappings. The chief sources of wax are cappings and old combs that are filled with drone cells and misshapen and not fit to be left. If you happen to use extracting combs with narrow top bars, you will get a nice little income by scraping those every year. I have seen these same kind of combs used year after year by lots of bee-keepers where they never were cleaned up at all. There are big wages in scraping off those combs, to say nothing of the nicety in handling them for next year's work.

Another source of wax production, which is not so welcome to the most of us, is when we happen to get a dose of foul brood. One man melted up over 5,000 combs, and if it had not been for the wax press it would have been a hard matter to estimate the big loss he would have had, but the wax he received more than paid for all the foundation he needed, and he had about \$50 to \$75 to the good.

We cannot speak of wax production without coming to the question of how best to secure the most wax, and then we get into the question of wax presses. To get good results in rendering up combs, we must have some kind of wax presses. I have had slumgum sent to me different times from different bee-keepers, and while I have not taken the trouble to bring any figures here, I want to say, every time when the wax press was used I could make big wages in handling that slumgum which was sent to me, but it is not a nice job. It would run from 25% to

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