

Hints for Beginners

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How much the average bee-keeper is at the mercy of the one who publishes a bee journal and how much he must of necessity be at the mercy of the supply dealer. As a rule there is not much danger in this from the standpoint of honesty, but a mistaken conclusion may be a great loss to individual bee-keepers, and a supply dealer should either himself be constantly trying goods he proposes to manufacture or have some one else try them. Here is another weak spot in the awards by a judge on new inventions. He is to pass judgment upon things of which he has probably never heard of before, to say nothing of having never tried them.

During the past year a very general discussion has been going on about the merits and demerits of the so-called "Hoffman frame." In this discussion I have so far taken no part, but now that it is probably about over in the United States journals, I thought it might be well to say something upon the subject of frames. We know how we had first the old box hive or straw skep. Here the comb was attached at the will of the bees to the top and sides of the hives making them immovable, and necessitating the destruction of the bees in order to secure the comb.

As far as I know the next stage toward present frame systems was a top bar to which the bees attached the upper part of the comb. The bees still attached the comb to the walls of the hive and when the comb had to be manipulated a long

knife was used with which the comb was cut loose at the sides. Then came side bars to the frame and practically our present development.

We have had sizes of frames without number, as to length and breadth, and we still have many sizes in use. In my estimation a frame a little deeper than the Langstroth is not objectionable in the sense of being a good size, and yet when I get a Langstroth brood chamber with two supers, and find so many combs in the white honey flow with brood to the top of the frame and the honey in the super, the natural division between brood and pollen and the honey being at the top bar of the brood comb. When I see this I have more doubt than I once had as to the desirability of a deeper frame. When, however, the great inconvenience in getting supplies of accurate make and at a reasonable price in odd sizes is estimated and the impossibility of getting them on short notice, and the fact that when through going out of the business or death, these goods will have a very limited demand and correspondingly low sale then I would not hesitate one moment upon deciding for the Langstroth. Different widths of top bars will be used, different thicknesses, and the same of side and bottom bars. I find that it is desirable to have the top bar as wide as a brood comb; if not, the bees having a little encouragement, will, as it were, continue the motion and build comb up to the queen excluder above. However, it is not my intention in this article to show the value of a top bar 1-8 in. wide.

As to whether we shall have self-spacing or not self-spacing hives to help deciding this, let us see what we want in a frame. The primary object in having the frame is to enable us to handle the combs with ease and rapidity, and let us remember this, for a

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