

BE YOUR OWN 'COMMISSION MAN.'

By E. G. Hand.

I note by the September number of the C. B. J. that there is a bee-keeper down in York county who is very much concerned for the life of the honey business in the event of the admission of Jamaica into confederation, and consequent removal of the import duty of two cents a pound on honey from that island; and there may be a little something in what he says, though, as Mr. Laing, who should certainly know whereof he speaks, points out in the November number, the man at the Jamaica end would probably annex most of the additional value which it would give his honey. I think we should rather concern ourselves about the proper disposal and distribution of the honey we produce at home; for, properly handled, it would not begin to supply the demand, and the Canadian market is, I believe, a big enough customer to use all the honey produced at home several times over.

Right here is the place for somebody to jump in and say that this subject is a "chestnut." Of course it is, but it is a ripe one, and when we have "chewed" the burr and shell off it, we shall wax fat on the kernel.

Judging from the bee-keeping specialists, whom I have had the opportunity of rubbing up against in the last ten years, I am forced to the conclusion that the average specialist makes a specialty of only the first half of his business—the production of honey, and leaves the more important half—the selling of the honey—to the commission man. The commission man lives in the city, and, consequently, most of the big crops find their way there, often to be shipped back to the outside towns, and more often to beat down the city market—which rules the price for the country.

Now, there is no necessity for this,

and there is no excuse for it. There is no reason in the world why the specialist at producing honey should not also make a specialty of seeing that his honey is sold to the best advantage to himself and to the honey producers generally. Perhaps the big producer may not want to "fuss with small quantities of honey," as he puts it, but he should. If it isn't the producer's business to see that his product is disposed of to the best possible advantage, in the name of common-sense, whose business is it? Who is there who should take as much care to see that the honey is put before the consumer in such a way that it will create a demand for more, as the man who is depending on the demand for honey to supply him with the necessities of life? And who has more time to cater to the wants of the town and village markets than the specialist? What does the specialist do in the winter? In discussing the bee-keeping business one time with a man who has no other occupation whatever, and no trade to work at when not occupied with the bees, he mentioned, as one of the disadvantages of the business, that it only occupied about half his time—that he had nothing to do in the winter, but sit around, twiddle his thumbs and wish it would hurry up and be spring. He had his honey all sold early in the fall, shipped to Toronto at six cents a pound or so. Within ten miles of his home yard are two towns and a farming community with a total population of about four thousand people (if I remember rightly). When asked how much honey his home market used, he replied, I think, that about a thousand pounds kept them going. As near as I could learn at the time, the only reason those people didn't use from eight to ten thousand pounds a year (which they would do without much coaxing) was because Mr. Specialist