

been constructed into opposition, for nothing else could possibly be so interpreted. I fancy that many friends of the consolidation expected me here, "with sword and spear," to fight them. In this they will be disappointed, for I am only trying to find a thoroughly practical method of consolidation. If that be found, then count me in its favor—if not, then I am opposed to any bungling work in that direction.

I would not request the author and supporters of the suggestion to show how the two societies can operate advantageously, if consolidated—the work to be accomplished by the united society, and *how* is it to be done. In short, to "show their hand," so that we may know what to expect.

So far, the National Bee-Keepers' Union has been a phenomenal success. It has fought a good fight and come off victorious. Its opponents have been worthy of its steel. It has fought village, city and State legislation against bee-culture—powers in high and low places, and has wrung from the highest courts of America, decisions in favor of bee-keeping, which will be referred to, as precedents, for generations to come. In fact, it stands to-day without a peer—aye, without an equal, as a "rock of defence" for the pursuit, supporting it against the assaults of ignorance, envy and prejudice, in every State and Province in North America.

Is it too much, then to demand that our constitutional rights be respected, in giving to each member a full and free vote, on the question of uniting its fortunes with any other society on the globe? Is it not my duty to demand that it shall be shown how the combination can be effected and operated without crippling its efficiency; abridging the rights and privileges of its members to manage its own affairs, and at the same to maintain its prosperity and perpetuity?

It must be stated that the Bee-Keepers' Union was created to do a distinct work—to defend bee-keepers in the enjoyment of their just and legal rights. This it has done, is now doing, and doubtless will continue to do, to the entire satisfaction of its members, to the honor of the pursuit, and to the admiration of just and honorable man the world over. Anything, therefore, which may cripple its efficiency, or prevent further triumphs, will be universally deplored, and must be obviated.

In advance of any action at this convention, it is but just and right to ascertain the thoughts and feelings of the members of both societies. One prominent member of both organizations wrote to me thus:

"Why unite? There will be antagonism at once. I trust that the Union, which heretofore has done the work, will stay by

itself, and on its own lines do the work it was created to do, without regard to the Association, which also had its own special work to do."

Out of the many letters received by the general manager, from members of the National Bee-Keepers' Union, not one has been favorable to the consolidation, except possibly one from an editor of a bee-periodical. From a very emphatic one, let me quote a portion to show the intense feeling of the writer on the proposed consolidation. He says:

"I notice that there is a general desire for an expression of opinion as to the desirability of uniting the North American Bee-Keepers' Association and the National Bee-Keepers' Union. Well my vote is—No! No!! No!!! There might be many reasons brought forward against the consolidation, but one only seems strong enough to condemn it. The North American should first make itself a representative body—show that it has a spark of inherent vitality to contribute to the combination."

These letters can, of course, only exhibit individual views and feeling, but they come from members who have paid their money for dues, and must be considered. They have each a "voice" as well as a "vote."

Now on the other hand: If, as some have suggested, it is concluded to be desirable to reduce the annual dues of the Bee-Keepers' Union, to provide for annual conventions, and thus to gather in its fold all the bee-keepers of America—I can see no objection to that method of consolidation, for the Bee-Keepers' Union has shown itself to be strong and powerful, and able to cope with the opposition. It possesses inherent vitality, has from four to eight times as many members as the North American, and carries a good bank balance, and has won the right to exist. It is in good working order, and has a glorious future before it.

But here again my pride is challenged. Why let the old mother society die? After a quarter of a century's work, it has earned the right to a permanent place among the institutions of earth. Why not make another desperate effort to form the North American Bee-Keepers' Association into a representative body? True repeated efforts have not accomplished this in the past. Say not that they were failures—call each one but a delay, and make another effort. If a glorious work is before us, let no one ever use the word "failure."

When Cardinal Richelieu desired to see a messenger on a difficult mission to recover some important papers, and he instructed him accordingly, the boy hesitatingly exclaimed: "If I should fail