

IS PROFITABLE BEE-KEEPING A THING OF THE PAST?

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The above question as presented seems to indicate that the business of apiculture is not at present a paying one, but that in the past it has been remunerative.

When we call to mind the past prices of honey and the corresponding prices of other commodities, we do not find that the relative profits have materially changed, neither that the varied changes of methods to suit the changing tastes and circumstances have materially changed the profits of the present.

It is not probable that honey will be relatively lower than at present, neither that its production will relatively change as time rolls on, but there are some features in the present which seems moving steadily to the front. The mystery and superstition incident to a limited understanding of the business appears to be clearing away, and bee-keeping, like the raising of pigs and sheep, stands out in bold relief as a branch of domestic economy, which in the near future will present a vast aggregate composed of thousands of littles, each one of which has returned a better profit on the labor and capital employed than any of the other numerous ways by which the limited farmer and mechanic thrives. It is true that in the matter of profit bee-keeping, like other pursuits, has its ups and downs, its "off year," but that does not imply or demonstrate that the industry is likely to become less profitable in the future than it has been in the past. The proportion of successful bee-keeping to those engaged in the business who do not make money, is greater than in most pursuits, whether mechanical or agricultural, and at present no reason presents itself to show that the same ratio may not continue. Of course no one supposes that a few colonies of bees will support a large family and leave a balance in the bank—neither will a small farm—but the small farm and the small apiary combined probably will.

Out apiaries, so-called, afford practical evidence that bees in small apiaries either do better or are more conveniently handled. If such is the case, and it would be reasonable so to believe, there can be little doubt of the future. If I have made this paper plain, I have shown that bee-keeping has been a profitable pursuit, and that no substantial evidence exists to prove that it will ever be less so, and apiculture, as one of the many methods of profitable and diversified industries, either on a large or limited scale, does and will continue to hold an interesting and remunerative place among other successful pursuits.

T. F. BINGHAM.

James Heddon—Thought that it was not a correct principle to go into the most paying business. If there was any business paying better than another, all things considered, it would soon be filled up to put it on an equal footing. The question was who was adapted for the business? there were fortunes to be made in it, and to be lost. He thought the great aim was to try and encourage labor.

Mr. Root said that the great point was to do a thing well; he said people said farming did not pay, but he mentioned a friend, who after working an acre forty years, got \$1100.00 worth of red currants from it; so it is in bee-keeping, he could not make money in the flowers, true, but there was much in our power. Mr. Root said the demand for honey was on the increase, they were selling the fifth car load in six months.

A lengthy discussion followed upon the marketing of honey.

Mr. B. Walker said, nine-tenths of the honey in Detroit was adulterated, and jars of honey sold without the name of the producer in defiance of the law.

Mr. Heddon, defending himself for selling honey cheap thought if another bee-keeper handled his honey he should have a profit, and it was well to let the bee-keepers keep their customers in remembrance of honey; he sold honey to bee-keepers mostly.

HONEY STATISTICS AND THEIR ADVANTAGES TO BEEKEEPERS.

Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, of the convention, I suppose by honey statistics that your secretary had in mind a collection of facts embracing the increased or diminished value of swarms going into winter quarters, loss in winter and spring, condition of bees at beginning of season, production of full crop of honey gathered both white and dark, comb and extracted, the quality of honey in the different markets remaining unsold, with price etc., as all this information is essential in obtaining a reliable and accurate report of the honey crop. Their advantages to the beekeeper are many and varied, and besides the advantages it is something of a satisfaction to know as soon as the crop is harvested about what you are going to get for it. The North-Eastern beekeepers association (now New York State) made the first attempt to collect statistics of bees and honey in 1878. But I believe that the best and most practical plan yet devised originated with the