

Honey for Market

—By R. F. HOLTERMANN

In selecting the above subject as a topic for the Annual Meeting of the Ontario Bee-Keepers Association Convention, I chose it because it gave abundant ground to cover. It might almost embrace the entire subject of bee-keeping, but my intention is to confine myself to a very small portion of the field. I need not enlarge upon the importance of decreasing the cost of producing honey by having strong colonies for the honey flow, not only by bringing them well through the winter, but by giving them judicious care from that time until the honey flow begins. To many this alone is the battle ground for profit or loss in bee-keeping. Beginning with the supers, a beginner should ask himself, if he shall produce comb or extracted honey, and what are the advantages and disadvantages of the two systems. Not counting the cost of the supers which can be used from year to year, and remain with the bee-keeper, a hundred pounds of extracted honey can be sold without disposing of any of the Apian Supplies. In one hundred pounds of good comb honey however, he has to give with the honey 120 sections at a cost of about 50 cents, enough thin super foundation to fill 120 sections, 73 cents, ten comb honey crates \$1.00, a total of \$2.23. In large quantities this may be diminished somewhat, but with a beginner this is not far astray. The cost of material which has to go with the sections is then just about 2½c. per section. The moment a man places a value on comb and extracted honey, he runs the risk of having some one trample on him, but I believe that the interests of many demand that his subject should be taken in hand, and if any of the figures given are not satisfactory, you can do your figuring on a basis satisfactory to yourselves. First-class comb honey in this Dominion of ours is selling all the way from \$1.00 per dozen sections to \$2.50; the price varying according to season, locality, honey crop &c., or running from 8½ to 21 cents per section; when you deduct 2½c from that, leaving from 6½ to 18½ cents per section. In the tens of thousands of pounds of comb honey our company has

handled, and many more transactions I know of, I have yet to hear of a case where the seller was paid for his comb honey crates. First-class extracted honey sells in Canada at 6 to 15c per lb., more frequently at 6 cents when purchased in large quantities, such as 1,000 to 5,000 lbs, and comb honey at 11 cents. The difference thus far on first-class honey is ½ to 2½ cents per pound; but have we considered the entire difference of cost? I think not. Those who consider that in production 70 lbs. of comb honey is equal to 100 lbs. of extracted honey, are considered by the majority of bee-keepers as over-estimating the ratio of comb honey; many more say it is 50 to 100 lbs. I am inclined to believe that with the best management the first is right, but with a bee keeper not thoroughly experienced, or not having time to apply his knowledge, it may be even less than the latter, but taking the ratio of 70 to 100 lbs. 100 pounds of extracted would bring generally \$6.00, while the 70 lbs. of comb honey would generally bring \$8.40. With 2½ cents deducted, which is the cost of foundation, sections, and crates, this leaves \$7.30, a difference of 30 cents. For the sections must be folded, the foundation put in the supers, wedged up and put on. These supers must not be put on too soon lest the bees spoil the foundation and soil the sections. Increased care must be taken, and with every caution there will be a greater tendency to swarm, a snag against which beginners and other bee-keepers are so likely to run.

In extracting, we have the honey to take out and the empty combs to replace. To offset this in comb we have the bees to drive out of the sections, the comb to scrape, the grading, the nailing of the comb honey crates, and the packing.

If the above figures are correct, it does not pay to produce comb honey with the present market difference. If the figures are not correct I trust that the above will give some food for thought and everyone can adjust prices to his own condition.

Thus far we have referred to first class comb honey, but we know that the beginner and the man busy with other de-