

BEE-KEEPING IN SASKATCHEWAN

(By W. L. Couper.)

I have been requested by the courteous editor of the C. B. J. to send him an article on bee-keeping in Saskatchewan. My experience with bees only extends to a period of nine years, but as all of it has been in this province, it may prove of some small value.

It must be very carefully borne in mind by the bee-keeper who thinks of starting an apiary here, that by far the greater part of the land is, or will be, devoted to wheat raising. As, unfortunately, bees have not yet discovered a way to make honey from wheat, it is obvious that in the best farming districts the apiarist's occupation will not be profitable. There are however, parts of the country so broken by bluff and slough, that they are not likely to be laid under cultivation for a long time, and in these districts the bee-keeper should obtain a fair crop of honey of good quality, which will almost certainly find a ready and lucrative sale in this locality.

Practically all honey now, is obtained from the wild flowers of the prairie, but considerable interest is being taken by farmers in the possibilities of clover culture, partly as feed, more especially to renew the fertility of the land. If the experiments now being tried prove successful, the apiarist will benefit greatly.

My bees are taken out of the cellar the first fine day after April 15th. By that time the prairie is usually studded with small blue anemones, which appear as soon as the snow is off the ground, and from these the bees gather a certain amount of pollen, and (I think) honey. Before these are gone the first willows are generally in bloom and the different varieties of these will help brood raising till the wild cherry bloom appears. From that time

till the end of August and sometimes later, there is a steady succession of nectar-yielding flowers, but the flow is almost always very slow, and consequently conducive to excessive swarming. I have twice seen a quick flow: the first lasting only three days, being terminated by heavy rains. The second (last year), lasted eight days. Surplus is usually obtained in the latter part of July and throughout August. Bees are placed in the cellar, sometime about November 1st.

The largest crop I have obtained was last season, sixty-nine pounds to the colony (thirty-two colonies, spring count). I cannot say how many colonies a moderate locality would carry.

There have been several articles on bee-keeping in Manitoba and the Northwest in the western farm papers and good success seems to have been obtained. One man reported one hundred and thirty-five pounds to the colony, but did not state how many colonies—a vital point.

There is one advantage in this country which may be of interest to queer breeders. There are no wild bees, and so very few bee-keepers, that an apiary could be quite easily located, so that one could be sure of every queen being purely mated.

Sask., March 21st.

The Victoria County Bee-keeper Association will hold annual spring meeting in the Temperance Hall, Little Britain, on Good Friday, April 13th, sessions commencing 10 a.m. and 7 p.m. All are invited to attend.

R. F. Whiteside,
President.

A. H. Noble,
Secretary.

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