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Bee Keeping a Branch of Agriculture

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WHEN we look upon the art of bee-keeping, and the bee in the past we find that they stood high in importance. In ancient days honey was practically the only sugar known, and Scripture with all its authority points to honey as an acceptable and enjoyable food. The science of to-day, owing to the inverted condition of the sugar, the volatile oils and the aroma of honey, fully endorses any statement that in ancient times was made about honey.

For the investigating mind, the bee is food. Our most classic ancient writers found scope in the bee for research and for pen. Their judgment has been sustained and their example followed by eminent scientists of the present day.

SUBJECTS FOR NATURE STUDY

Colleges or schools that, in undertaking the work of nature study, and have not an observatory hive or hives, are not availing themselves of the opportunity of having, within available reach, at all times, during the active season, specimens showing the various stages through which insect life passes. Neither have they made use of a study in nature which can and does awaken the greatest enthusiasm and interest.

When we look upon bee-keeping in its importance to Canada and Canadian agriculture, and particularly to Ontario agriculture, we have an industry that will bear the closest scrutiny, and a business which should have every encouragement.

Intensive agriculture must play an important part in Ontario and some of the other provinces. Fruit growing, poultry and bee-keeping must enter largely into this scheme of intensive farming.

BEE-KEEPING UNJUSTLY DEALT WITH

There is no line of agriculture that has been more unjustly dealt with than bee-keeping. The treatment which it has received officially at Ottawa and by the provinces is such as we might expect from the autocrat to the humblest subject of all Russia. Bee-keeping has not been granted a fair hearing or trial. It has been in act condemned as unworthy. Bee-keeping is a legitimate child in the agricultural family, and as fair to look upon as any in Canadian agriculture, and yet it has been tossed from its legitimate home—the Department of Agriculture—in seasons of darkness and has been left largely to be nourished and developed by anyone who has had kindness and heart enough to take it in and give it a little fostering care. It was left in this way at a time when undisturbed enterprise had perhaps already

ample to occupy his care and attention, and was already handicapped by not receiving the help which other lines were receiving. All this happened to bee-keeping in the face of being taxed to foster the other industries.

TAKES NOTHING FROM THE SOIL

Bees and bee-keeping take nothing from the fertility of the farm. Honey like butter is a carbohydrate. The hives can stand in the orchard or pasture, or some other place where they displace no other crop on the farm. The food of the bees takes nothing from any crop available for sale. Moreover, the greatest scientists of the world after keen and careful research, and is it not reasonable, tell us the bee is of inestimable value in the pollenization of blossoms. Thus, one year with another, bees insure greater fruit crops, and greater returns of clover seed and buckwheat. Practical experience has borne this out. Yet, with all our boasted mediums for distributing in-

were nearly 650,000 lbs. It is unfortunate that such should be the case. The imported goods are generally much inferior to our own, and the consumption is thereby correspondingly decreased. With the increase of population in the West, as well as in other parts of Canada, the demand for honey will increase still more. We cannot expect to meet this increased demand as our output has actually fallen off.

LEFT TOO MUCH TO THEMSELVES

The average bee-keeper manages his bees as if they could run themselves. Between this mistaken notion, bad seasons and foul blood, which latter the Hon. Nelson Monteith has taken active measures to stamp out, we have a decreasing number of colonies.

If the future has brighter and better things in store for this industry, than had the past, remains to be seen. Bee-keeping is a business. It requires the care and attention that any other le-

gitimate business does. It should be left alone by those who do not intend to give it study, care, time and attention. The attitude of the Department of Agriculture should not practically endorse the idea that bee-keeping requires neither care nor attention. It should give bee-keeping the encouragement and help that its importance, not only in itself, but in its relation to other lines of agriculture, amply justifies and warrants.

The future of the industry depends upon the work and enthusiasm of the men who keep bees as much as it does upon the action of the Government.

It can be doubly ensured by co-operation among them. To make legislation effective, the bee-keeper must do his part. He must combine, energy, skill and good judgment in caring for his bees.

Such care and attention on his part will set a standard that will convince our Government that bee-keeping is an important branch of agriculture.

The Eradication of Perennial Sow Thistle

G. A. Brechen, Peterboro County, Ont.

Until about five years ago, the Perennial Sow Thistle and I were complete strangers. However at that time upon the purchase of a farm with one field very badly infested with this troublesome weed, I made its acquaintance to my sorrow. From our very frequent arguments since that time as to who was to be owner of that field, I have learned to recognize "Mr. Sow-Thistle" quite readily and I have also learned some of his most important strong as well as weak points.

Being young and enthusiastic, I immediately got busy according to the best of my knowledge at that time, to rid the field of all trace of sow-



BEE HIVES IN AN ORCHARD

Beekeeping is closely interwoven with other branches of agriculture. The bees are of inestimable value in fertilizing blossoms, and insuring good crops of fruit, alike and buckwheat. The apiary shown in the illustration is owned by Dr. J. Harkness & Sons, Dundas, Ont.

formation, some men look upon a bee as an insect which sucks the strength out of the plant, and injures the crop.

Let the foremost agricultural province in the Dominion at least, accede to the request of the Ontario Bee-keepers' Association, and the Ontario Agricultural and Experimental Union, and conduct experiments to ascertain the effect of bees working upon blossoms. Such an act, and the resulting data, would be published over the civilized world.

REQUIRES BUT LITTLE CAPITAL

Bee-keeping does not require the large capital that general farming requires, in order to afford a living. Bee-keeping can be worked up gradually. Canada, and particularly Ontario, has at World's Fairs won a reputation for the quality of its honey that other countries have never approached.

Every portion of Canada is not suited for bee-keeping, but a very large portion of Ontario is exceptionally well adapted to this industry. Our imports of honey some ten years ago averaged about 22,000 lbs per annum. Last year the imports