

BEE-KEEPING IN CANADA

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From the Farmer's Advocate.

When we cast even only a superficial glance over the Canadian agricultural horizon, there may be some difficulty in stating the exact condition of bee-keeping. This much, however, we know. There is an immense influx into the West by people who have been lured into that country by either the results of the labor of those already there or the decision that the country promises to them what they are looking for, which in the majority of cases is comfort and affluence as far as this world can give it. They expect two things, a good crop, taking one year with another, and they expect to reap in dollars or assets the increase in value of the land which they homestead and pre-empt or purchase. Their produce is largely grain, and their necessities for living, or their desires, which are often much beyond this, compels them even for food to draw upon the produce of the farms of older Canada.

I have no desire to enter into any controversy over this matter; more, I will not be drawn into it—but it is my humble opinion, in my estimation, based upon sober judgment and experience, that the Ontario producer of foods is in a measure, a considerable measure, reaping the advantage of this demand; also that the spirit of the times is to enter employment where the beauty of the hands is not marred by the evidences of manual labor, forgetting or not knowing that the decree, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread," cannot be ignored without its consequences to individuals, and still more to families, if it is continued from generation to generation. As far as actual physical enjoyment goes, the individual who enjoys food, rest and shelter to the full is the one who knows what hunger, toil

and exposure to the elements are. But the far-off view of the city is fair indeed, and it is only when we can see beneath the surface of city life that we find less to value in it.

With the spirit of the times there is every likelihood that the production of farm produce is going to be an attractive proposition for Ontario, at least, and if a financial exigency should arrive, the farmer then is always the man in the best position, for he can produce his own food.

Coming to bee-keeping. The prices at present paid for honey make this industry an attractive proposition. The demand for honey in Canada is quite equal to the production. Again, bees are well known to be very important agents in the pollenization of blossoms, from which come fruit and seed of value to the farmer. This question need not be enlarged upon here. But why is it that so many have gone into bee-keeping and made a failure of the business? When we look over sections of country where years ago dozens of men kept bees, we often find none or very few in the business now.

Bee-keeping is a business requiring skill, intelligence and application. Successful and extensive bee-keepers are not made at colleges and schools, but by coming in contact with the practical operations of the apiary on an extensive scale. The theory of bee-keeping is only a step in its mastery. The lines of operation vary so much, according to conditions, that no set rules can be laid down to carry out the season's operations. For instance, I once heard an address given on the prevention of swarming, when the bee-keeper was instructed to break up the brood-chamber of the hive as soon as the bees built cell cups. I do not agree with that practice, but there may be good bee-keepers who advocate such. But it so happened that at that very time I and others had a lot of colonies in that con-