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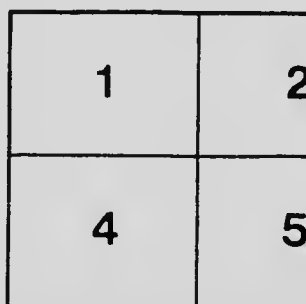
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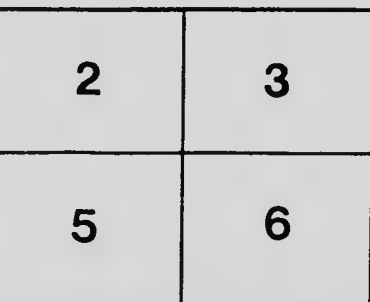
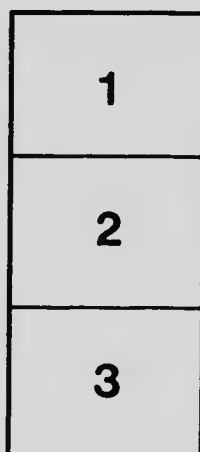
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PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA.

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NOV 1914

Honey Production in British Columbia

INSTITUTE 898

SEASONS OF 1913-1914

BY F. DUNDAS TODD, FOUL-BROOD INSPECTOR.



IN the month of October, 1914, there were listed on the records of the Department of Agriculture the names of 466 bee-keepers in the Province, and it is estimated that there are probably about 200 more with whom the Bee Inspectors have failed to get into touch. From all known bee-keepers there was requested a honey-crop report for the years 1913 and 1914, and 385 kindly responded. Briefly stated, we get the following results:—

	Colonies in April.	Crop in Pounds.	Average per Hive.
1913	1,191	37,782	31.7
1914	2,197	117,275	54.8

If we assume that those reporting are fairly representative bee-keepers, then a little calculation will show that the total honey-crop of the Province in 1913 was probably about 50 tons, and in 1914 from 150 to 200 tons.

Four years ago there was fully unanimous agreement among the bee-keepers visited by the inspectors that British Columbia was a rather poor bee country. Let us take the reports and learn what light they throw on the subject.

First, let it be said that a country is considered a good one for bees when a skilled bee-keeper can depend upon a crop of 50 lb. a hive, one year with another. The year 1913 was considered by many to be the worst season for twenty years in British Columbia; 1914 was deemed above the average, so we have the extremes of good and bad. As a sample of what constitutes a poor year elsewhere, one may refer to the Province of Ontario, where skilled bee-keepers report an average of 10 lb. a hive in 1914.

Now, we have very few skilled bee-keepers in British Columbia, yet the reports indicate an average crop of over 31 lb. a hive in 1913. If we select out of the reports the apiaries reporting 31 lb. a hive or over, we will find that fifty-six bee-keepers with 525 colonies produced 27,832 lb. of honey, or an average of 53 lb. to the hive, while 329 bee-keepers owning 666 hives produced 9,950 lb., an average of 15 lb. to the hive. It begins to look as if a very poor season in British Columbia would be called a good season anywhere else.

Examining the figures for 1914 in the same way, we find ninety-three bee-keepers who report an average production above 60 lb. They owned a total of 778 colonies and raised 65,352 lb. of honey, being an average of 84 lb. On the other hand, 292 bee-keepers owning 1,359 colonies produced 38,824 lb., being an average of 29 lb. per hive.



The above figures seem to suggest that the difference between a skilled and an unskilled bee-keeper consists in this: that the former gets a crop of honey three times as great as does the latter.

If we take the "above average" reports for 1913 by Inspectors' districts, we find that in the Okanagan and Thompson River country 117 colonies produced 7,804 lb., an average of 67 lb.; in the Kootenay and Arrow Lake region 111 colonies yielded 5,105 lb., an average of 46 lb.; in the Lower Fraser Valley and Vancouver Island region 297 colonies gave 14,683 lb., an average of 50 lb.

Examining 1914 in the same way, we find that Okanagan and Thompson River District possessed 161 colonies yielding 15,300 lb., an average of 95 lb.; Kootenay and Arrow Lake region, 140 colonies producing 11,150 lb., an average of 75 lb.; Lower Fraser and Vancouver Island had 471 colonies yielding 38,824 lb., an average of 82 lb.

While these figures are most excellent, especially when we consider how few really good bee-keepers there are in British Columbia, they, as a matter of fact, merely suggest the possibilities of honey production, for reports of an average of 150 lb. per hive and over are not uncommon.

We also learn that in 1914 in all probability our honey production equalled consumption. The rather sudden upward movement in production, combined with a decided tendency towards lower consumption, will doubtless in some districts delay the marketing of the crop. It must be remembered that the wholesale houses usually contract for California honey about March, and that therefore these obligations are still in force. Furthermore, the honey-crop is not a short-period product, so its consumption is necessarily spread over the year, being most in demand when perishable fruits are scarce. The average bee-keeper should therefore endeavour to sell as much as he can locally, spreading the sale as much as possible over the whole year. What he should cultivate is a line of steady customers.

The people of British Columbia are rather small consumers of honey, so there exists a very excellent potential market that should develop with a little effort on the part of the bee-keepers.

One bee-keeper thoughtfully reported that he had sold 200 lb. of his crop locally in quart sealers at 65 cents a quart net. Then he shipped 400 lb. in pint and quart Schram sealers, a dozen to the case, to the City Market, Vancouver, where the honey sold on an average at 75 cents a quart. Deducting freight, containers, commission, and other charges, he got 17 cents a pound for the honey.

Like all other farm products, the more tempting honey can be presented to the buyer the better a price it will command. It may just as well be frankly said that the average bee-keeper in the Province is not getting his product in first-class marketable shape. To be tempting, extracted honey must be bright and sparkling, not in the least cloudy, and of a light-golden colour. Now, when judging honey at local agricultural exhibitions, the writer finds that most of what is shown is dull and cloudy, due to the presence of particles of wax and pollen. This condition follows if honey is cool when extracted. To remedy the trouble the honey should be slowly warmed to a temperature of about 140 degrees, when all the particles will rise to the surface and can then be skimmed off. The wood enclosing section honey should be scraped clean, inside as well as out, with a jack-knife.

The Inspectors are agreed that on quality alone British Columbia honey will some day hold a high reputation. Honestly, they know of nothing better.

ORDERING SUPPLIES FOR 1915.

Now is the time to order bee supplies. Although in 1914 the dealers made preparations for big increase of business, yet the end of June found not a hive, frame, or sheet of foundation in their hands. It will therefore be wise for every bee-keeper to notify his dealer as to how much he expects to use in the coming season. Payment of the goods need not be made until they are wanted.

BEE-SUPPLY DEALERS IN BRIT COLUMBIA.

Henry's Seed Store, Kingsway, Vancouver.
Wm. Rennie & Co., Homer Street, Vancouver.
Trapp & Co., New Westminster.
M. J. Henry, Chilliwack.
W. Romahn, 21 Third Street, Fairview, Nelson.
L. Harris & Sons, Vernon.

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