

GUIDE TO BEE-KEEPING.

CHAPTER I.

Apian Possibilities of British Columbia.

AS the Department of Agriculture is very frequently asked about the possibilities of bee-keeping in British Columbia, an effort has been made to get definite information from those engaged in the industry. There was one great difficulty, the absence of a list of bee keepers to whom appeals could be sent. However, there were gathered together from various sources the names of fully 200 apiarists on Vancouver Island, along the Fraser River, and in the Districts of East and West Kootenay. To these was sent a series of questions covering thoroughly the climatic conditions, sources of nectar and pollen, the duration of the honey flow, its average yield, and the nature of the winter protection of the hives.

The replies received cover these regions fairly well, sufficient to at least give an indication of the possibilities in different localities.

In the Eastern Provinces of Canada, especially in Ontario, there are many men who depend on bee-keeping entirely as a means of livelihood, but, so far as is known, there is no such development of the industry in British Columbia. Thus far the largest number of hives reported as being operated by one individual is fifty, but any one confining his energies to bee-keeping alone generally considers 300 hives as the minimum number on which to spend his efforts, these being usually scattered over a considerable territory. On the other hand, it has been learned that bee-keeping as a side issue is much more common than was anticipated: in fact, in the dairying and fruit raising districts a small apiary would seem to be a necessary feature of almost every ranch. In some localities from which the information is rather complete there is seemingly one keeper of bees to every twenty people. This fact is rather valuable, because it shows that it is unnecessary for the homeseeker to bring with him to British Columbia his colonies of bees from the Eastern Provinces. Indeed, the Department of Agriculture earnestly advises that neither bees, empty-ned hives, nor used bee appliances of any kind be brought in, so as to prevent, if possible, the introduction of bee diseases, from which the Province is at present apparently free. Of course, there is no objection to the importation of queens from reputable breeders.

In many cases there was learned the number of colonies owned, the total being 667, suggesting an average of eleven hives to each apiarist. This is a much higher figure than was anticipated.

SOURCE OF HONEY FLOW.

To those not familiar with bee-keeping terms, it is perhaps advisable to explain that the phrase "honey-flow" means that season of the year when the bees gather more nectar than is necessary for the daily need of the hive, and they are thus able to store up surplus honey for winter consumption. As from 25 to 30 pounds are usually sufficient to carry a colony over the winter, all above that amount may be taken by the bee keeper. Since his returns are immediately concerned with the honey-flow, it is important for him to know its source, its real source, for not infrequently he assumes that it comes from a well known honey-plant, when, as a matter of fact, it may be actually obtained from one he never suspected. For instance, white clover is a famous