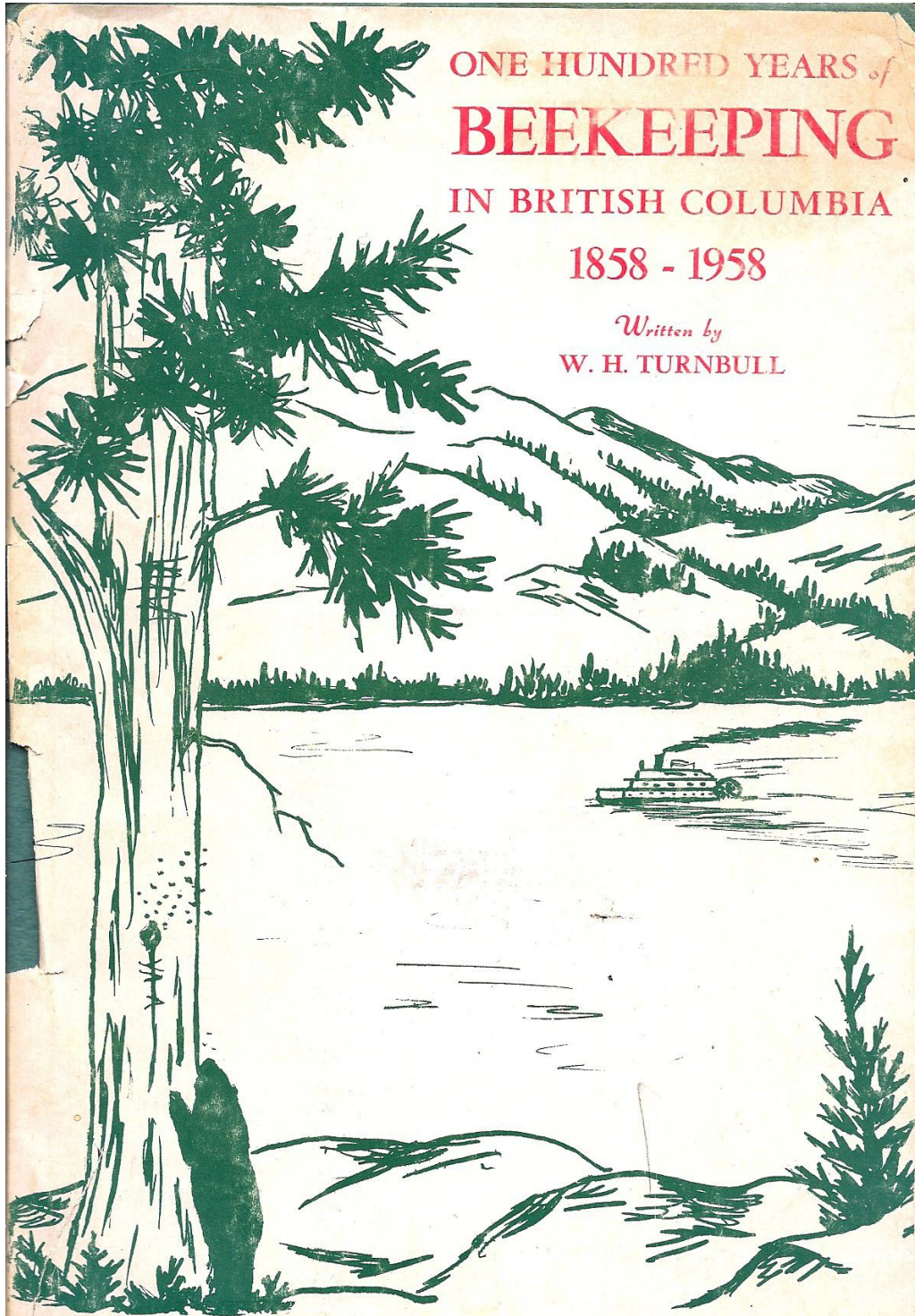


ONE HUNDRED YEARS *of*
BEEKEEPING
IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

1858 - 1958

Written by
W. H. TURNBULL



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the East had gained a knowledge of bees and the handling of them. They soon became known as the "beeman" or "bee woman" of the District, and all the neighbors went to them for advice when they happened to "catch a swarm," and the man or woman approached would always be ready and willing to give every help possible. In this way every small community developed a system of keeping bees patterned after the way the bee man in the district kept his own, and no uniform system that would fit in with the peculiarities of British Columbia was adopted. This was the condition of the infant bee industry in the early years of 1900, and soon the different bee-keepers, seeking a more uniform knowledge of keeping their bees, began writing to the Department of Agriculture at Victoria, asking for information. No such information was then available.

CHAPTER IV

In the spring of 1910 a Scotchman, F. Dundas Todd, arrived at Victoria. He was a man with a very inquiring mind, and was interested in bees. While he lived in Chicago he had been in touch with veteran bee-keepers such as the Dadants of Hamilton, Ill., and the Roots, of Medina, Ohio. He naturally went to the Department of Agriculture to get what information he could gather on keeping bees in B.C.

He was not able to get very much, but during his visits to the Department he met W. E. Scott (then Deputy Minister of Agriculture) whose Department had for some time been getting correspondence from different parts of the Province asking for information in connection with raising bees. As he had been unable to supply the information asked for, he was very willing to "talk bees" with a very likable fellow Scot.

The results of these visits was that the Deputy Minister asked Mr. Todd if he would be interested in getting in touch with some of the bee-keepers who had been writing in to him for information. Todd undertook the task with the Department paying him for the time he spent, and any out-of-pocket expense that he might have. Todd being a very enthusiastic bee-keeper and having no other work at the time, wrote to every bee-keeper listed, and in a very short time he had a list of some 200 bee-keepers from all over the Province. He asked each "bee-man" in a District to send him the names of anyone who kept bees in his area. Mr. Scott was very well pleased with the results and immediately tried to find money to keep Todd more or less busy gathering information and compiling a list of bee keepers for the rest of the summer and fall.

In the fall of 1910 the Federal Government made an arrangement with the Provincial Department of Agriculture that a certain sum would be advanced each year to assist the Department in building up the Dairy, Poultry and Horticultural industries (all in their infancies) in the Province. W. E. Scott evidently saw here an opportunity to help out the bee-keepers who had been asking for information and assistance. He put the infant industry under the Department of Horticulture, and employed F. Dundas Todd, on a part-time basis, to do what he could to get it established. In the fall of 1910 Todd was able to submit to the Deputy Minister, a list of 210 bee-keepers with a crop report of 20 tons of honey for the year.

Mr. Scott was very well satisfied, and early in 1911 he, with the help and assistance of Mr. Todd, drafted and presented to the Legislature, an Act known as the "Foul Brood Act"; this Act became law. The purpose of the act was to give protection to the bee-keepers of the Province against the importation of any bees from the United States which might be infected with either of the two bee diseases which were beginning to affect bees in the country to the south.

Up to this time, and for a few years after, Foul Brood was unknown in the Province. This to a great extent was due to the fact that very few, if any, bees were imported, and the bee that had populated the whole lower Mainland area was a direct descendant of the original bees imported from Oregon by J. D. B. Ogilvie in 1858-60. These bees were a bit smaller in size and had developed a race known to the early bee-keeper of the day as "the native bee."

This native bee was very prolific, but the early bee-keeper felt that he had to "improve the strain" and to W. H. Lewis, the proprietor of the Burnaby Fruit Farm, goes the honor of importing the first Italian Queen Bees from California, in 1878.

In the spring of 1911 F. Dundas Todd came over to Vancouver and began to visit among the known bee-keepers of the Lower Mainland of the Province. He used to make his headquarters at the "Canada Hotel" (now known as the Marble Arch), on Richards Street. Most of the bee-keepers on a visit to Vancouver made it a point to call and have a visit with Mr. Todd, and I have noted as many as a dozen gathering in his room to talk over their problems.

When the weather was good he would visit the different bee-men in the Districts within reach of Vancouver by "Tram," as the B.C. Electric Railway to Chilliwack was then known. It was not easy to get around the country in those days as there were few motor cars available.

It is not possible for the writer to remember all the bee-keepers he met while in Todd's company, but a list would be very incomplete that did not carry the names of Fred E. White, "the Garden Apiaries" in North Vancouver; W. H. Lewis, Burnaby, B.C., Chas. F. Sprott (for many years Reeve of Burnaby); Eber E. Stride (the Kingsway Greenhouses), and a man who was to become very well known in later years, W. C. Freedham of Edmonds Street, Burnaby, as well as A. A. Pauli, now a resident of Surrey, and still keeping a few bees.

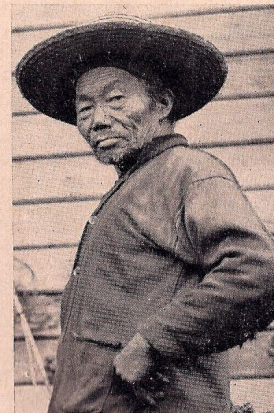
South of the Fraser River in the Delta, John Reagh (the Scotch shoe-maker at Ladner), shared the honor of being one of the early bee-keepers in the District with Hugh F.



Wing Kee's Apiary. (Finlay and Lewis looking it over, 1919.)

McAllister of New Westminster, and W. Tamboline of Westham Island. On Mr. Tamboline's farm at Westham Island was located one of the last of the Chinese Apiaries that had developed and been built up after 1885.

This apiary was the property of Wing Kee and flourished until 1920 when it was purchased and the bees transferred into Modern Hives by a bee-keeper in the Village of Ladner. At the time of the transfer the apiary numbered 40 colonies and not one was in a modern hive, but were housed in old fashioned tea caddies, powder boxes and apple boxes. Some ingenious ideas were incorporated in this apiary, one of which was the plan he had for supering. He had the bees housed in a tea caddy



WING KEE, "last of the Chinese Apiarists," Westham Island. (Dec.)

or box in the top of which he had cut a hole about 3" in diameter. He kept this hole covered until the honey flow started, then he removed the cover and placed a box over the hole, and the bees immediately went up and filled the box with comb and honey which he would remove later on in the season when the bees had clustered in the lower box for winter. When the bees were transferred to modern hives it was done under the supervision of the Provincial Inspector, and he told me that there was not a trace of any brood disease in any of the forty colonies. Bee-keeper Wing, with all his crude methods, was not a menace to his bee-keeping neighbors, some of whom had been buying his honey (after it was strained) for years, and selling it as their own product.

CHAPTER V

Over on Sea Island (where the International Airport now stands), was a bee-keeper of a different type. Mr. A. Sexsmith, who learned his bee-keeping in Ontario, and as a result all his hives were uniform and had movable frames 12½ inches square which he used for a brood nest, and for which he had a special top made fitted with an old type zinc Queen excluder over the hive below. He used 8 frame supers filled with Langstroth frames.

I purchased this apiary from the Sexsmith Estate in 1915, and it was the real foundation of my own apiary at Sullivan Station, as up to this time I had only a few colonies taken over from D. H. Masters (mentioned earlier in this record), and transferred to modern 10 frame hives.

Further up the Fraser Valley lived the Wades of Surrey Centre, and C. A. Carncross and D. W. Poppy of Langley, as well as the first woman to take an active interest in bees, Mrs. A. Morley of Fort Langley. Mrs. Morley took a very keen interest in her bees and was of real value to her neighbors when they were seeking information as to the best method of handling a swarm they might happen to catch. Alex Holding of Fort Langley still had bees, and had had them from the time he purchased two hives from Rev. Alex. Dunn, who brought bees to Fort Langley in 1877.

Up the old Yale Road we found the Merrifields and the Lehmans, as well as the Whites, all well established on the ridge south of Mount Lehman Station. Around Abbotsford we had the Higginson Brothers; J. W. Winson and William Fadden. Sumas Lake made a big break in the District in which bees could be kept, and it was not until the area around Chilliwack was approached that more bee-keepers were found. In Chilliwack D. K. Henry (who made the "Henry 8 frame hive") was located for a number of years, and was one of the early pioneers with bees in that area. North of the town was located the real "bee-man" of the District, on Fairfield Island, known far and wide as "Honey" Johnston. H. Langton Johnston was a real pioneer among pioneers as well as a really good bee-keeper.

Crossing the Fraser River on the Rosedale Ferry, Ivo Tuttyens, a Belgian bee-keeper, had settled on an island in the middle of the Fraser River. Mr. Tuttyens seeded the whole island with white and yellow sweet clover for his bees, and one spring the exceptionally high water took the island and scattered it on sand bars along the shores from Agassiz