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A MONTHLY JOURNAL, DEVOTED TO BEE-KEEPING.

Published by E. TIPPER, West Maitland

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VOL. 18. No. 6. SEPTEMBER 30, 1909.

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MAITLAND, N.S.W.—SEPTEMBER 30, 1909.

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According to the decision of the Executive, on the 23rd ult. the president and secretary waited on the Under Secretary of Agriculture on the 25th, in reference to lectures on beekeeping.

The president submitted the names of six prominent beekeepers, and suggested that six lectures be given, one by each lecturer, or else that three lectures be given, and two lecturers speak each night for about an hour each.

In reply, the Under-Secretary stated that he does not approve of six different lecturers, each of whom might differ in his views, one from another, which would never do. His idea was that if the Government appointed a bee expert, then he should give a series of lectures. It would never do to having lecturers contradicting one another, perhaps.

The president said that if one man gave all the lectures there would be the expression of one man only, whereas the executive of the Union aimed at giving a wider scope—not necessarily contradictory—then more good might result.

The names submitted were: Messrs. McIlveen, Lord, Branch, Benson, Niven, and Parker. Mr. W. Abram to take the chair at each lecture.

The Under Secretary asked if these men are competent to give an address to a large audience. Not every one could speak in public—and he cited an instance where an absolute failure resulted owing to the lecturer's inability to speak before the public. How is it that Mr. Hall is not on the suggested list of lecturers?

The president had with him a copy of a letter written by him to Mr. Hall on the 14th August, as follows:

"Dear Sir,—The Executive of the N.S.W. and Commonwealth Beekeepers' Union having decided that a few lectures on Beekeeping be given in Sydney, I take the liberty to ask if you will deliver one, at a date to be defined, and let me know your decision by the 20th, and the subject you will take.—Yours truly, W. ABRAM."

But no reply has been received.

The same invitation was sent to several others, and not even an acknowledgment of the letter was forthcoming.

The Under Secretary said that in the circumstances the fault lay not with the Union's Executive, and he would speak to Mr. Hall, because he considered him an excellent lecturer.

He then stated that he would submit our suggestion to the Minister.

On this not altogether satisfactory state of affairs a meeting of the Union Executive was held on the 30th ult. Present—Mr. W. Abram (president) in the chair, Messrs. J. J. Branch, Henry Lord, and D. W. Parker.

The president reported as to the interview with the Under Secretary. A lengthy discussion took place, and it was ultimately decided that the secretary obtain information as to price of a central hall with the view of giving a few lectures irrespective of Government patronage, as it is considered that the subject is of sufficient interest to draw an audience.

At the same meeting the president reported that the secretary, Mr. J. Richardson, had intimated to him that he resigned the secretaryship, on the ground

that he lives a long way from postal communication, and he expected the meetings to be held in the day time, as he cannot attend in the evenings, and to miss even one of these meetings is a serious matter for the secretary, as he loses the run of things going. The Executive accepted the resignation with regret, and on the proposition of Mr. Henry Lord, seconded by Mr. D. W. Parker, Mr. J. J. Branch was elected to take the dual position of secretary and treasurer. Mr. Branch accepted, and stated that though he did not wish the important position, he would do his best in the interests of the Union as secretary.

The president also reported that he had tried to obtain a small room at a nominal, or at least a small rental, but all these are occupied of evenings. He also saw Mr. Stephens, of the "Farmer and Settler," 435 Kent Street. Mr. Stephens replied by letter that, unable to find a suitable room elsewhere, he offered a room in their office free of charge. In the meantime the president had arranged with the occupier of the Prince of Wales Hotel, Mr. H. Walters, opposite the Railway Station, that he would always be pleased to accommodate us whenever we wished to meet there, and that he would not accept any remuneration. It was therefore decided that the meetings be held there.

The secretary called a meeting for the 13th September, at 7.15 p.m. Present: W. Abram (president), J. J. Branch, Henry Lord, and D. W. Parker. The president reported in the afternoon he had called on the Under Secretary for Agriculture, partly in reference to the spraying of fruit trees with poisonous compounds, such as arsenate of lead, and to point out the serious injury that must result to beekeepers if these directions are rigidly followed out, as there are always some blossoms just appearing and secreting nectar when others are dropping their petals, and when spraying is recommended; partly to find out how

the matter stood with regard to the lectures, as no information had been received.

The Under Secretary met the president on his way to a board meeting, but this much was obtained: That the Minister of Agriculture thinks the expenses a hindrance, as regards lectures, and that he never would think of more than one man giving lectures. As regards the spraying with poisonous compounds, the Under Secretary agreed that this is the great problem to solve, but that the rules laid down must be carried out.

The president pointed out that if this spraying is carried out as per regulation then bees must die, being poisoned by collecting the nectar that is in the nectaries of the blossoms when spraying takes place.

The reply was that this could not be helped; the trees have to be sprayed to insure fruit.

But what if all the bees are destroyed by these poisonous compounds, where will the fruitgrowers get their agents for fertilising the fruit blossoms, said the president. Bees are the best fertilising agents the fruitgrowers can have, and if the bees are poisoned, there will be no agents to fertilise the fruit blossoms, and as a consequence there will be but little fruit.

The Agricultural Department knows that, but nevertheless tries to kill the goose that lays the golden eggs.

As regards lectures, the Secretary had obtained information, and submitted same. In view of the Department of Agriculture not wishing to give us their support, it was decided that at least two lectures be given in the St. James' Hall, Phillip Street, Sydney, under the auspices of the N.S.W. and Commonwealth Beekeepers' Union, and that such lectures take place on the 18th and 27th of October; the first lecture to be given by Mr. W. Abram, the best-known beekeeper in Australia, the other, or others, to be ar-

ranged later on. Mr Henry Lord to take the chair at the first lecture, Mr. W. Abram at any subsequent lecture.

The Executive believe that these lectures will pay their way without any encroachment on the Union's capital, and in any case the Executive are prepared to foot the bill, so that the Union's funds shall remain intact.

If beekeepers in the country have friends interested in bees, let them know and advise them to attend. The lecture will be advertised in the Sydney daily papers, and the admission is to be only 6d., just a nominal fee to cover expenses, and who knows what may be learnt. It is not a money-making affair—it is meant to assist the amateur. The sick, the weak require help, not the strong, and the Union desires to proffer their help.

As to spraying fruit trees with arsenate of lead, etc., the matter is a very serious one for beekeepers in fruit-growing districts, more serious than ringbarking, even, and yet the president of the Beekeepers' Union is told that there is no help for them—the fruit trees must be sprayed!

It is almost incredible that one industry branch should be fostered, while another is ruined. Have the beekeepers to suffer all the ills that can possibly be put on them? Is there no other remedy than that of poison to destroy the various diseases affecting fruit? Where did these diseases come from? They were not here 25 years ago, I know. Is it not the Government's own fault that these diseases are now prevalent? New South Wales has been the dumping place for almost anything for years in the shape of fruit, and with the rubbish disease entered. Now, when too late, the Government is waking up, and to get rid of the various unwelcome intruders they go to the extreme. Why should the struggling beekeeper suffer for the sins which he did not commit? It is absolutely unfair, unjust, to punish the innocent beekeepers in this matter. In my opinion there are

other factors at work which induce diseases to prosper. If these were discovered I believe there would be no need to use poison as a spray.

I shall be glad to hear expressions of views from others, either in support, or to the contrary.

* * * * *

Never before in the history of beekeeping in Australia has there been such a stir, such an activity shown as just now. Now, when almost too late, beekeepers are waking up and beginning to ask for their rights, to protect their means of livelihood. The formation of the Union is bringing new life, fresh hopes for the better into existence, and beekeepers respond by becoming members to help one another for the betterment of conditions, as they begin to observe that the executive mean to improve the conditions.

In the few months of their existence, the executive have done excellent work, much more than the most sanguine would expect, and they mean to do more, however hard the task may be. They devote their time, considerable time, for the benefit of the industry, and it is pleasant to note that beekeepers recognise the work, and assist them to renewed efforts.

Most things start in a small way, and when there is an urgent need for something to be done. This applies to the Union exactly, and thanks to the membership increasing there is hope that much may be achieved. It is urgently needed indeed. It is hardly possible to name any artful industry that is more in need of improved conditions than beekeeping, requiring specialists to carry it on at the best of times, so why should they be at the mercy of all and sundry? But they must put themselves to the front, must agitate for their dues, must protect their rights. Nothing will be offered them unasked. The rest does not know that they exist, or how they exist; it has to be made known to them, and the often and prominently this is done the better.

Mr. J. Sullivan, Nangus, writes:

Mr. W. Abram.—Dear Sir,—I am here-with sending particulars of reserve adjoining my apiary, which has been applied for at the local Land Board Office by an adjoining land holder for an agricultural lease; and I ask you to place this before the Union, and if you think it will help my case to protest against ringbarking of the timber. I would be much obliged if you write to the Under Secretary for Lands, either on my behalf or in the interests of the beekeeping industry. This reserve, though small, is thickly timbered, and all being yellow box, and right alongside of my apiary, if granted by the Board for agriculture, would be rung. This would be the means of making my apiary practically worthless, as already too much of the timber has been destroyed. The Land Board sits at Gundagai on the 5th of October. I would ask you if possible to do anything to do it at once, as I think, in fact, I am nearly sure, this application will be dealt with on that date. Trusting you may be able to do something in the matter.

On receipt of the foregoing I wrote to the Under Secretary for Lands at once, as follows:

Dear Sir,—Herewith I enclose a list of particulars re a Special Lease, and Mr. J. Sullivan, Nangus, asks me to plead for him to insert in the conditions of sale that yellow box trees be preserved for honey. I understand from Mr. Sullivan that it is a reserve which has been applied for at the local Land Board Office by an adjoining land holder, and he pleads that if this land is ringbarked his apiary would be worthless. This reserve, he states, is thickly timbered with yellow box, and right alongside his apiary. It is very distressing for the poor, struggling beekeeper to be debarred of a living, and if it is possible to prevent the destruction of the yellow box timber, I hope you will allow the

same to remain intact for the one that makes a living thereby. I have also requests from the Trunkey district beekeepers, of whom there are more than twenty in that district, who wish to see box trees preserved for bees and timber on land which is of no other use than to run sheep. Such otherwise unsuitable land is just what suits the beekeeper to make a living, and for that reason they claim it to be preserved for bees. We do not wish to interfere with suitable agricultural land, and some day, ere long, we shall place before the Department our views by deputation.—Yours etc., W. Abram, President Beekeepers' Union.

* * * * *

The letter and footnote to Mr. Brogan's letter were sent to press before Mr. Sullivan's reached me.

In every case that has been brought before me the Executive of the Union have supported me in the actions taken. I have no doubt, although I dealt with the above letter at once, without calling a meeting, that the same will be agreed on at our next meeting. But I want to make it clear that if the matter, of any description appertaining to beekeeping, is placed in the Union's hands, then leave it unmolested until it is found that the Executive either shelved or neglected it, or failed to bring about the desired results. It is impossible to do everything and all at once. We have been asleep too long, thus our present stand is a far more arduous one than if we had been alive to our interests all the time. But I am very much of the opinion that beekeepers in former years did not see as far in advance as they ought to, and also that they thought they might do better by their own selves than by uniting. There is even now a distinction shown. Numerous beekeepers have joined the Union, but yet others stand aloof, perhaps because they do not like to part with a paltry 5/0 a year, perhaps because they think that the benefits the Union may bring about in the interests of bee-

keeping can be shared by them equally as well. This may prove an illusion, as the Union intends to work for their own and not for everybody. It is possible to formulate a scheme in which unionists only will participate, at least as far as the sale of products goes. It is remarkable that beekeepers side even against their own interests. The point in fact is this: What beneficial, permanent results have been attained heretofore? Contrast them with the results of the Union, only a few months in existence. Who has ever worked so hard as the present executive. They know the beekeepers' trouble, because they have the experience, and they are willing to improve the present conditions. Those that are not just yet in trouble or difficulties should aid and assist others that are, as one never knows when the well-to-do may also need aid. I would also recommend beekeepers to write more to the oldest bee paper, the "Australian Bee Bulletin" and to propound their various views. Quietude is taken as an assent of any subject under discussion, but it is better to make a statement to that effect, otherwise a wrong impression may be created.



Attunga,

27th August, 1909.

Mr. Abram,—Dear Sir, Your Postal Cards duly to hand, and I thank you for the interest and trouble you have taken on my behalf. I have since written to the Under Secretary asking to have all small yellow box trees not closer than forty yards from another tree (yellow box) left unrun. This would give some semblance to proper preservation, with a dash of propagation in it. I was very sorry that I did not have time to write a letter on Forest Conservation and Export

of Honey. With reference to the first, I have this to say—that unless the yellow box tree is preserved on grazing lands that we will soon be short of honey for our own use. The honey flow of this district (Tamworth) is fast disappearing. I am the only beekeeper not affected as yet, but all those south-east of Tamworth are going bung fast owing to private owners of the land on which the trees are, generally having no bees, so they ringbark. If we had a surplus of yellow box honey it would sell in any foreign market. For export I think that all we need to do is wax the inside of honey tins, and that objectionable odour would not be present when the tin is opened. To wax a tin about 1lb. of molten wax is required. Put a small hole in the opposite corner of the tin from the bung, make the tin quite hot in a warm room, in front of a large fire, pour in the wax, then put in the bung stopper, and whirl the wax all over the inside of the tin. Utilise the small hole to drain all the superfluous wax, and the quantity used in the tin will be small. When tinning up honey it is very advisable to exclude all air from the inside of the tin, which can be done by pressing the sides of the tin till the honey excludes all air, then insert the bung, making quite sure that the edge of the bung is smeared with honey to make all air-tight. If these precautions are taken, I think the principal part of the objection to odour will be absent on the arrival of the honey in foreign parts. If any air is left in the tin with the honey it collects a very objectionable odour, and I have a very strong suspicion that this odour is caused by the action of the honey on the tin, hence the necessity of waxing the tin as above described. Paraffin may answer the purpose as well as beeswax, but the latter is the purest of all material substances, gold not excepted, and is the fittest material to come in contact with honey. I may here state that milk dishes can be covered with so fine

film of wax that the only proof that can be given of its existence on the surface of the dish is the extraordinary fact that milk will usually remain sweet twice as long in a dish having the surface waxed than it will in any other dish, however clean. I have proved this by using wax pans for milk, and when after repeated scalding, rubbing and washing, the invisible wax film became worn off, the milk would become sour in the usual time.—I am, yours faithfully,

JAMES BROGAN.

(Mr. Brogan's writing to the Under-Secretary may or may not have any beneficial result, as its request differs from mine considerably, vide my letter copy in last issue. I am a disinterested party, and act as such, with good results. The sale of said lease was withdrawn, and will be offered again with a new condition added. Whilst thankful for this concession, I at once asked for more, in the interests of beekeepers; but Mr. Brogan's letter may debar this and other cases his being contra to my request. I believe Mr. Brogan is in error to think that yellow box honey will sell best in any country; and the waxing of tins inside will not remove the flavour of honey.—W. Abram.

Mr. Jas. W. Shakespeare, Condobolin: I am glad to see you have been successful in forming a Union amongst beekeepers, and I hope something could be done in the way of establishing a commission agency shop, in say, Sussex-st., for all sorts of produce as well as honey, for you will find amongst your bee-farmers men who are able to produce almost anything that would be required to keep a good business going all the year round in Sydney, and it would not stop at that, for there are plenty of others who would send along their produce, etc., so long as we had a good salesman, and everything looked after. Why in every town in the State where there are bee-farmers you have your agents helping things

along, and I believe it would be a wonderful success, and a good thing for us all. Please find enclosed my 5/0, contributions to the Union, and 5/0 from a neighbour beefarmer, Mr. William Muir.

(Thank you. If every beekeeper will help as you do, the Union will be a power in the land.—Ed.)

Mr. John Richardson, Botany: Received your favour on the 3rd inst. I sincerely trust that neither you or any member of the Executive think I had any grievance whatever, for such is in no wise the case. I found it impossible to be a regular attendant at the meetings of the executive, especially at night time, and you know for a secretary to be absent from even one meeting causes confusion. I shall certainly never omit to advance the cause of the Union whenever I have the chance.

Mr. W. E. S. Tompson, Windeyer, writes; I am very glad to see by the last 'Bulletin' that the long-needed Forest Preservation is at last before Parliament. It is a great pity that the Government did not take this matter up before; it would have saved millions of acres of good useful timber. It is really a shame to see the way the greedy sheep owners destroy the timber, under the idea that they are going to get a few more blades of grass, and don't get it then. I have seen miles of good timbered country destroyed where grass never did grow, and never will grow, and where there is no soil grass cannot grow, no matter what sort of seasons we have. I am glad to see that the Union is pushing the matter before the House. The timber we depend mostly on here for honey is the yellow box, red gum, and stringy bark. The flooded gum, which grows only along the creek and river bank, or in marshy flats, is an autumn honey, which makes good winter feed, also so does the honey from the willow, but it also grows only on the creek banks. The honey is dark from both of these

trees last named, but the quality is good, and if we do not extract it, the bees winter well on it. We don't get so much honey from the white box, as it mostly comes into bloom in the winter, and of course the bees can't work much on it. But the honey out of the white box is splendid. The yellow box is the best we have, both for quality and quantity. Now as the timber question is before Parliament, this is the time for all beekeepers to buckle in and fight for their rights. We have been kept in the background long enough. Roll up, beekeepers, and let us have a place in the front. There is another question I wish the Beekeepers' Union would bring before the House. That is the careless use of rabbit poison, especially that jam poison called Rabbo. It is jam with strychnine mixed into it. It is laid about in sheep paddocks, and also used by rabbit skimmers. I used some of it myself some time ago, and one morning was unable to get there early to remove the baits, which are laid in bits about the size of a butter bean, or say the top of your finger, where rabbits come, and on getting there a little late, the bees had found the jam, and were in clusters on it. Of course I quickly removed it. This jam is left by rabbit skimmers and sheep owners on the top of the ground, and the bees find it, and in a bad time, when honey is scarce, they will suck on anything that is sweet, thus causing the destruction of colonies. I saw in the Mudgee paper about twelve months ago where a beekeeper in the west not far from Mudgee, lost 50 colonies of bees through the rabbit poison lying on the top of the ground. It should be covered. This poison may be carried into the hives and get mixed with the honey in extracting. I would like the matter brought under the notice of the Government, and I think they should take some action in the matter. It should not be left lying about on top of the ground. This winter half of my apiary has been wiped out, and I don't know whether it

is through the rabbit poison or anything else. There is plenty of honey in the hives, not many dead bees about the hives, and no dead ones inside. They seemed to die away from home. I never lost bees like it before. Some of the hives are down to a handful, and the queens with them. I consider my loss at over £100. I have kept bees for many years, and could always manage, whatever happened, but this time I am beaten, and it will take me some time to pull it up. Now, Mr. Editor, can you throw any light on this matter, you being a professional beekeeper. What few bees I can find about dead are of the natural size and not swollen. I was a bit late in feeding them up last autumn, but I did not feed them all, as most of them had enough honey. Last season was a bad one here; we did not extract after the 8th December. There was very little brood in the hives when I wintered down, but I have often seen it so before, whether it is on account of a bad time, such as we have had, that the queens gave up laying altogether or not, and the bees died out, I don't know, as I never disturb them in the winter months. Last winter was colder than this winter has been, and they wintered well. Certainly they had their hives full of honey. Last summer we got no swarms, and the hives never seemed to build up, but got weaker. The thermometer here ranged from 23 to 46 in the winter. Of course that is very cold for bees, and if a colony is weak it cannot keep up its warmth. Since I started to write this, some days ago, I have been looking about the hives, and I see a great many dead bees lying outside. The queens are in the hives, with a few bees in some cases, and other hives are empty. I really believe they have been gathering poison from rabbit baits or some flowers. I think I had better not trespass any more on your valuable space.

¶ If Mr. Tompson will carefully note my remarks re dwindling, etc.,

he will note that the present complaint is more than scarcity of pollen or honey; it is developing into a disease, but the cold wintering may have caused it. A positive remedy is not yet known, except what I recommended from time to time.—The Editor.

PRIZE COMPETITION.

The Publisher of the "Australian Bee Bulletin" offers Prizes for competitive contributions on subjects appertaining to Beekeeping, under the following conditions:—

1. The prizes are:—1st, 7/6; 2nd, 5/0; 3rd, 2/6.
2. Competitive articles to be addressed to Mr. W. Abram, Editor A.B.B., Beecroft, headed "For Competition." Write full name and address, but also affix a sign or mark, as it is intended to omit full name on publication, but to publish name of all competitors first issue after judging.
3. Entries for each month close on the 20th. Any subject may be chosen.
4. One judge will be appointed by the Editor, to act as single judge, but each month there will be a different judge, and his name will be published together with the results. The judge's decision is final.
5. Postal notes will be sent to winners on receipt of the judge's decision.

Our aim is to encourage juniors and amateurs to exercise their skill in beekeeping and in writing, thereby assisting one another. (The editor's son does not compete.) The most efficient beekeepers will be selected to act as judges. A copy of the A.B.B. will be sent to the one selected each month, and the results published next issue. Competition starts now, and prizes will be offered for your work. Who will win?

N.B.—This is a money prize competition—not a disposal of queens.

WEAK COLONIES, PUTTING ON SUPERS AND PREVENTING SWARMING.

When the honey-flow begins, and one has four or five out-yards from three to fifteen miles apart, and has to ride, day after day, over rough, hilly and sandy roads, he has got his work all cut out for him; and from the time the honey flow starts, until extracting is finished, he has got to buckle right down to hard bone labour.

Putting on Supers—Only Eight Frames Used in Ten-Frame Hives.

The first hive I came to has a super on, that has been on nearly two weeks, and both hive and super are pretty well filled with brood. I set the super off on the extra bottom board, look the combs over in the hive for queen cells, and, not finding any, put a queen excluder on the hive, then a super with eight empty combs on top of the excluder.

By using only eight combs in a ten-frame super, the combs of honey will be very thick, bulging way out beyond the frames, which allows the uncapping to be more easily and quickly done; besides we get more honey to the super, than we do when ten frames are used. Then I set the empty super on top, take the frames of brood from the super they had on, and shake the bees off in front of the hive, putting the frames of brood in the upper super. By doing this I accomplish three things: First, I get the queen below. Second, I get any benefit that may be secured by shaking the bees off the combs. Third, I split the brood nest in two, filling the space between the two sections of brood with empty combs, which seems to give surplus room just where it is needed to keep down the swarming impulse.

The lower hive, or what from now on will be the brood nest, where the queen is now confined, is filled with hatching brood, and will give her all the room she will need to lay in for the rest of the

season. But very few colonies that are in this condition at the beginning of the honey flow ever try to swarm.

Colonies just ready for a Super require

Different Treatment to Prevent Swarming.

The colonies that give us the most trouble trying to swarm are the strong ones that are just ready for a super when the honey flow begins. Such colonies are carefully looked through, and all queen cells destroyed, then a super filled with all worker combs is given without any queen excluder, letting the queen use both stories for a brood nest.

She usually moves up into the upper story at once, and is found there at our next visit about a week later, when she is put below, an excluder put on, another super of empty combs given, and the super they had with brood in, is set on top. Colonies in this class will need close watching for a couple of weeks or so, for a good many of them will start cells, and prepare to swarm.

The Best Time to Build Up Weak Colonies.

I never try to build up weak colonies by giving them brood, until the honey season begins. If given brood in May, there may come a cold spell before the bees are strong enough to care for it, and there is a loss of the brood, and, generally of the weak colony too; and I know that it does more harm to a strong colony to take one frame of brood from it in May than it does to take two or three when it is preparing to swarm. So, when I find a colony at the beginning of the honey season, that has a super on, and both super and brood nest are filled with brood, and queen cells are started, I take from two to three frames of brood from them, give the combs a very light, quick jerk, just hard enough to shake off most of the old bees, and give the brood and young bees to one of these weak colonies that we have been nursing along all the spring. I take out all the combs that are not pretty well filled with brood, and fill

up the hives with hatching brood and young bees, taking them from the two story colonies that are preparing to swarm. Then a super is put on with a queen excluder, shutting the queen down below, where she will have all the room to lay she will need, as the brood given will soon be all hatched.

Swarming Caused by using Queen Excluders.

At our home-yard, where there is always some one to watch for, and hive the swarms, I let each colony swarm once if it will. This yard is managed somewhat differently than the out-yards. About the last of May, brood and young bees are taken from the strong colonies, that are in danger of swarming, and used to build up the weaker ones, so that by the time the honey flow begins, they are all about equally strong. Then a queen excluder is put on at the same time we give them the first super and almost every colony will swarm.

The first summer we were here, one of our yards had bees in six or seven different kinds of hives, and, as we had no honey boards that would fit them all, they were worked that summer without honey boards. There were only two or three swarms from about 120 colonies; but there was brood scattered through most of the supers when we extracted the honey.

A few of the old colonies are broken up after swarming, and nuclei made, and the best cells from the best colonies are saved and young queens raised to replace old ones.

Not Profitable to keep a Man at Out-Yards.

While the system of management we have planned out and follow, includes the prevention of swarming at all the out-yards, sometimes it becomes desirable to get some increase when there has been an unusually heavy loss of bees at any yard. Two years ago there was quite a heavy loss, caused principally by the loss of queens.

I thought I would let the bees at this yard swarm, but I made the mistake of giving them all a super and getting them started working above before I put on the queen excluders. I hired my eldest son, Frank, to stay there, to hive the swarms, and to take care of the bees. Only five colonies swarmed, and three of those absconded after being hived.

It cost us \$60.00 for Frank's services there. Of course he kept the bees supplied with super room, and did the most of the other work there, and helped about the extracting, but as near as I can figure it out, it cost us about \$15.00 per colony for those two we saved.

Last year I hired the man who lives where this yard is kept, to watch for and hive the swarms that came out, paying him fifty cents a swarm for hiving them. He hived seven swarms, of which two absconded. From the frequent examinations I made of the bees, I am satisfied that he got about all of them that swarmed.—Elmer Hutchinson, in "Beekeepers' Review."

THE PROPOSED BEE DISEASES ACT.

(By R. G. McLachlan, in Federal Independent Beekeeper.)

At the Conference no subject caused quite so much discussion as that of bee diseases legislation. The case for legislation of some sort was very forcibly and convincingly put, and on this point there is little room for dissent. Dissent begins so soon as the sort of law required comes under discussion. On June 22nd, some hours were taken up with debate on these matters. A copy of the New Zealand Act was read, and it was resolved to take this as a model. After defining such terms as "apiary," "beekeeper," "bee diseases," and others, the Act provides for the appointment of an inspector, with powers to enforce the law; for the compulsory notification under penalty of certain authorities, within a certain time,

of any case of bee disease known to the apiarist in his own hives; for the empowerment of the inspector to destroy any hives which he considers too badly diseased to be cured; for the prohibition of sale, barter, or other exchange of not only diseased hives, but of any hives, bees, or implements from a diseased apiary; for the abolition within a certain period of box hives. Penalties are specified for breaches of the Act.

Various amendments of this Act were proposed to suit it better to Victorian conditions. Mr. Bolton proposed additions dealing with the transport of diseased hives, making it compulsory for any apiarist moving to any district to notify the apiarists within a certain radius of his proposed site, of his coming, and empowering any one of them, should he think fit, and under certain conditions to have the incomer's hives examined by an inspector. It was left for the executive committee to bring the Act, so amended, under the notice of the Government, with a view to its enactment here.

I think I was pretty much alone at the conference in my fundamental dissent from the provisions of the New Zealand Act. It seemed to me to have all the virtues except effectiveness. However, I was not then able, on the short notice given, to formulate my opinion, so when the crucial clause of the Act, that providing for compulsory notification of known cases of disease, was put to the meeting I voted alone against it. This clause is the essence of the New Zealand Act. Without it the rest of the Act remains inoperative. My contention is that in most cases the clause itself is inoperative, because it can rarely be proved legally that a man knows his hives are diseased. Various laws compel the notification of certain events, as births, deaths, and so on. But these all relate to matters that can seldom be long concealed, and of which knowledge is easily proved. But in few cases is it possible, without spying and informing, to prove legally that

an apiarist knows of disease in his hives. The clause, too, will be continually broken by apiarists, who, discovering disease, such as foul brood, will simply treat it suitably and say nothing about it. Such men will not report and then wait for the inspector to take action. They will act for themselves. Again, if the clause be so amended as to make the presence of a certain degree of disease proof of knowledge within the meaning of the Act innocent men will be continually harassed. There are times of the year, as winter and the months of extracting, when apiarists seldom or never look at the broodnest. It would not pay them to do so. But during such times hives may become very badly diseased, and then under the clause, so amended, they would be liable to a penalty. So any way we take it, the clause cannot be made to catch the guilty without also catching the innocent.

Other objectionable provisions in the New Zealand Act are those prohibiting the sale or exchange of diseased hives, or of bees or appliances from a diseased apiary. As the clause stands in the act it would, if enforced, simply prevent any trade in bees. But it would never be effectually enforced, because the majority of beekeepers would tacitly ignore it. The same objection applies to Mr. Bolton's amendment re the transport of bees. The majority of beemen would simply neglect to give due notice, their fellow beekeepers concerned would overlook the offence, and so the clause would so seldom be used as to become practically inoperative. Unless a law is habitually enforced it falls into decay, and a too drastic law may have the effect of no law.

The purpose of a bee diseases act I take to be—(1) To safeguard beekeepers from their own ignorance; (2) to safeguard them against the ignorance, neglect or unscrupulousness of neighbouring bee-farmers. And in its working such an act should interfere as little as possible

with the liberty of apiarists; compulsory clauses should be as few as possible, while providing for the reasonable redress of grievances. Above all, it should be made to work without spying and informing. I think that an act on the following lines would meet all difficulties, in an effective and simple way. It should be provided:

(1) That an expert in bee diseases be appointed who should be both inspector and instructor.

(2) That any beekeeper be entitled to an expert inspection of his own hives once a year, together with such instruction as can be given in the course of inspection.

(3) That any beekeeper, knowing or suspecting the presence of disease or of disease provoking conditions in his neighbourhood should have power to demand an immediate inspection of his own apiary and of all hives within a radius of four miles thereof, provided he deposit £1 (or other sum) forfeitable should the demand in the inspector's judgment prove frivolous.

(4) That the inspector have power to eradicate any disease or disease provoking conditions, at the offending apiarist's expense.

Other provisions might be made, as re box hives, etc., to give effectiveness to these.

These provisions, I think, would better meet the necessities of Victorian beekeepers than the New Zealand Act, amended as it might be. Clause 3 in particular meets the chief danger from disease at present threatening the industry. It enables every apiarist to safeguard himself, and that without spying or informing. He need specify nothing, and his own hives being inspected as well as those of his neighbours none can have a grievance against him. It meets, too, the trouble provided against by Mr. Bolton's clauses. Finally, while giving every apiarist due safeguard, nothing in these clauses infringes the reasonable liberty

of any. Contrarily the New Zealand Act at every point interferes with individual freedom, and if strictly enforced must lead to perpetual harassment of bee farmers. And any law not well enforced soon becomes of no effect.

"GET THE GOVERNMENT TO DO IT."

(By R. G. McLachlan, in F.B.I.)

Anyone who followed up the discussions at the last conference of beekeepers must have been struck by the recurrence of the appeal for help from the Government. The proceedings were coloured, sometimes pretty strongly, by this idea. No doubt, there is something in it. I don't suppose any member of the association regards the Government as the three-year-old youngster regards his father: "Daddy will do it for me." But sometimes things were so expressed as to suggest this outlook. Certainly the bee farming industry has claims on the state, but it is well not to exaggerate them, or to forget the supremacy of self help. One of our members remarked that we should not be afraid to ask much from the Government, because if we asked little the Government would belittle our claims. Another speaker, Mr. Knight, of the Agricultural Department, referred to necessity for organisation and persistence, so that in the end we might, like the dairying industry, demand rather than ask things of the state. But we can hardly compare the honey producing with the dairying industry. Bee farming is supremely important to the few thousand people whose living depends on it. The rest of the community is not very heavily concerned. If honey became so scarce that none could be had at less than a shilling per pound the community would remain undisturbed—it would solace itself with jam and golden syrup. But the milk and butter industry concerns every individual in the state. If butter goes up to 1/6 per lb., or if fresh milk is dif-

difficult to be got, every household in the country feels it. Milk is practically a necessity of life to half the community, being one of those articles which must be had fresh, its local production is everywhere of supreme import. But honey, however popular its use may become, can never be a necessity. No one is likely to die for lack of honey diet, but every week many would die if they could get no milk. I say these things not in order to make light of the honey producers' claims, but to point to the necessity for not exaggerating them. Everything should be seen in its real proportions.

The Government practically means the community at large, and if wheat growing, pastoral, dairying, and fruit growing industries get large support from the state, it is because these industries are important to all the individuals of the state. Cheap bread, cheap mutton, cheap wool, cheap milk and butter everybody—particularly the consumer—benefits by. If these are scarce the body of the people suffer severely. But the only people actually concerned in the production of honey are the bee farmers. Consequently we cannot claim very much from the Government. We must resolve to rely first of all on ourselves; but that is not to say we deserve no help.

Help can be given in various ways, and that at a very slight cost. We can be helped very cheaply and effectively. It is not, for instance, important that we should have scientific experts appointed for the investigation of bee diseases; these diseases are being very thoroughly examined in U.S.A. and elsewhere. What is important is that we should be kept in close touch with the outcome of these scientific investigations. It would cost little to do that, but it would help us much. Mr. Bolton suggested one instance in which this might be done. There are instances to the point. We have now a supremely valuable means of public information—the Public Library

in Melbourne. Lately I have been looking through it for books relative to the scientific and practical issues of beekeeping and honey production. As to beekeeping the latest books I could find were the 888 edition of the A.B.C., and the 1889 edition of Langstroth. Other books there were dating all the way back to 1834. What we need there is a complete set of all the most approved and modern books on bees and beekeeping, both scientific and practical. Also volumes of the best beekeeping journals extant. Anyone then interested in any point concerning bees would know where to go for information, and not as now find there only a few out-of-date volumes. Another subject of much interest is that of honey-producing flora. At present I do not think there is any work bearing on that subject in the library. At any rate I could find none. Neither does there seem to be anything of the scientific, practical sort on the nectar-producing functions of plants—such as the influence of weather, climate or soil on nectar production. I was much struck with the silence concerning honey in works on the industrial uses of Australian plants. Baron von Mueller took the keenest interest in the industrial value of native plants. In his work 'Eucalyptographia,' for instance, he dwells often on the value of certain trees for their timber, kinos, tans and oils; but he never seems to have suspected any eucalypt of possessing value as a honey producer. Even more striking in its ignorance is the work of J. H. Maiden, "Useful Native Plants of Australia," (1889). This work is bulky, careful and comprehensive, and gives ample information concerning the food, forage, fibre, timber, tan, oil and other productions of hundreds of Australian plants, but it does not so much as mention honey. Yet of scores of plants honey is one of the most valuable products. Now if works on the honey flora of our own and other countries, and on the whole subject of nectar secretion by

plants, could be placed in the library, very substantial help to the industry would be given. Mr. Bolton told us at the conference how he had spent days in the library seeking information on the making of honey vinegar, and could find none. And anyone at present seeking information there on anything relating to honey or bees would be in much the same plight.

I have suggested one way in which the Government might at small cost help the bee farmer, by simply providing him with the opportunity to help himself. Self-help and co-operation are matters that need peculiar emphasis. The community is likely to measure the help it will give to bee farmers by the sacrifice bee farmers are prepared to make on behalf of their own industry. The time to ask help from the state is when we have come to the limit of our private and co-operate powers. We must be prepared to pay for all we get. Hitherto there has been a tendency to do nothing for ourselves, and to dodge payment for what has been done for us. It is well enough to get expert scientific help through the state, if it can be so got. But if it cannot be so got we need not fold our hands in idleness. What we want is a strongly financed association prepared to pay for the necessary scientific investigation. Considering the number of bee farmers in Australia, an interstate association, with an annual income of £1,000, is not an improbable notion. And an association with £1,000 to spend every year might stand independent of Government aid. It would have the advantage, too, of freedom. No matter how competent state officials may be individually, they are hampered in their work by departmental regulations; consequently Government action is slow, awkward, and oftenest ineffective. Everyone who has had to do with Government departments knows this. It is a disadvantage seemingly inseparable from Government work. The Government does very well in rout-

ine matters, but it lacks initiative and enthusiasm. The initiative and enthusiasm must come from those who are most concerned—who in this case are the bee farmers of Victoria.

EXPERIMENT WITH BEES.

An interesting experiment is being made with imported bees at Bolaro Estate, near Adaminaby. Mr. W. B. Gurney, assistant entomologist to the Department of Agriculture, acting under instructions from the Under-Secretary, has taken 31 English humble bees there for the purpose of establishing them in the district, in order that they may fertilise in red clover. Twenty were nested adjacent to a clover patch at Bolaro, and the remainder will be released later. The bees nest in soft soil, and gradually form colonies as the summer approaches, and are of the greatest possible value in fertilising flowers, particularly red clover. There are several native bees in the State which partially fertilise in red clover, but not sufficiently to retain a crop permanently. The importations have been made from New Zealand, and originally from England, and are specially adapted to fertilisation. It is understood that the Department of Agriculture will assist growers in obtaining supplies of these bees from New Zealand by supplying all information. Similar introductions of bees have been recently made in the Glen Innes district.—S. M. Herald.

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AFTER WINTER.

Owing to the very dry weather last summer there was very little honey to be gathered by the bees, and brood-rearing ceased about a month earlier than at other seasons. By careful dividing the honey stores each hive had a sufficient amount to last them to the spring, but as the stores were spread all over the combs, far more combs had to be left than usual. Besides, the bees were older than they should have been for wintering, and under unfavorable weather conditions in June, July and August, they might have died before young bees, then reared, took their place. But the winter proved excellent, and aided them in every respect, with the result that they came into spring much better than would be expected. It was dry and fairly mild; had it been wet and cold matters would have fared different. As it is they are breeding well, and hatching bees replace the old ones many-fold. The most forward stocks have drones, and are not far from swarming.

Queen rearing can now be carried on.

Whilst we had a rather dry spell until quite lately other parts have had an abundance of rain, but in general prospects are very good, and at the end of the season there may be a considerable quantity of honey for disposal, which rises the most important question—how to obtain a fair price for the product. Now is the time to consider what can be done in the matter.

LARGE AVERAGE FROM FEW COLONIES.

Every now and then some beginner reports an average yield per colony quite beyond that of many more experienced beekeepers. Some have attributed this to the intense enthusiasm of the beginner. But the enthusiasm of the genuine bee-keeper does not fade out with the passing of the years. Even if it did, the

enthusiasm of the beginner would hardly offset the skill and experience of the veteran. The difference is to be rather in the fact that the beginner having only a few colonies, his bees have a better chance at pasturage. M. V. Facey says in the Beekeepers' Review:

"In 1906, which was rather a good year in this locality, the colonies in my yards considerably exceeded 100 pounds per colony, but farmers' bees, with only a few swarms in a place, handled under my directions, netted over 200 pounds, while one man's bees (only two colonies) yielded 540 pounds, although of only ordinary strength in the spring. I have invariably found that, as a rule, to have a few bees in a place will exceed in results, per colony, the yield of a yard of, say 15 or 100 colonies, about 33 per cent."

The explanation is easy. Suppose 100 colonies in an apiary where white clover is the main source. The surplus will be stored in the space of 2 to 6 weeks. At other times no surplus will be stored, although quite a bit of honey is gathered and used by the bees for their own needs.

HONEY.—

Fair demand. Choice selling at from 3d. to 3½d. per lb., with medium quality on offer at 2½d. to 2¾d. per lb.

BEESWAX.—

Demand quiet. Best bright is worth 1/2½ to 1/3, and dark from 1/1 to 1/2 per lb.

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RANDOM NOTES.

Shaking energy into bees.—Many methods have been resorted to by American beekeepers to induce the maximum results from their bees, but this shaking business, so much commented on in the bee-papers lately, seems the most curious of all. That it will make a too energetic colony more energetic still most of us know by sad experience. "Up, guards, and at 'em" has been the response to the shaking, and the result a flight and vigorous chase, with memories of defeat by the shaker. Once on a memorable day in June a bold aspirant to the name of "expert" knocked loudly at the gates of a citadel guarded by some energetic amazons. The response was prompt and pointed; the result a retreat to cover with unmistakable evidence of a "stern" chase. Shake some energy into our bees: this may do no harm; but to ascribe any big result in honey-gathering after may also be, let me say, "jumping to a conclusion."—B.B. Journal.

Hunger Swarms.—I saw one of these the other day. The owner wondered why the whole of the bees had left the skep with the queen, and after turning up the skep I was able to show him their empty cupboard, and explain their despairing flight from home. The poor little swarm was then returned to its combs with a feeder to go at, and the bees are no doubt now a contented, happy lot.—B.B.J.

Flight of Queens.—On a single day a short time ago I saw two queens leave their hives, and return during a merry flight of young bees. On the next day, which was very fine, I found a queen on the flight-board of one of my hives in a "ball" of bees. After releasing the queen I examined this and all the other hives, but found none queenless. Can there have been two queens in the hive over winter? The queen found outside was fertile, so was the queen in the hive, which was very strong.—B.B.J.

CAPPINGS.

The value of honey imported into the United Kingdom in the month of March, 1909, was £3,135. From a return supplied to the "Irish Bee Journal" by the Statistical Office, H.M. Customs, London.

A writer in the "Irish Bee Journal" says:—It is said that the reason why the Foul Brood Act is not extended to England is that the reports of the County Associations' experts show that very little foul brood exists. Such pleasing delusions occasionally receive a rude shock. Last May I had a little "eye-opener" which sheds a lurid light. Four stocks were offered for sale to me for the Isle of Wight. These colonies were guaranteed free of disease by two experts, viz., by the hon. secretary of a certain County Association, and also by one of the paid experts of the same Association. Within a fortnight of these two experts examining these stocks, I happened to be in the neighbourhood of this apiary, and at the owners invitation had a look at them myself, and was surprised to find all four colonies affected with foul brood—two of them rather badly. The owner was astounded, but declared he relied on the experts. I offered to send a piece of the combs to the "British Bee Journal," and also to the "Irish Bee Journal," and to stake a sovereign on the result of their replies, but the gentleman declined to run such risks. A few days afterwards a similar case occurred over the guarantee of another County Association's expert. On publishing these incidents, Mr. W. J. Farmer, late of Cornwall, wrote stating that he had known many experts who were unable to detect foul brood when they saw it. Perhaps the most tragical incident in "apis-mellifica-ignoramusia" was that of a well-known expert who carried round a stinking foul brood stock (in ignorance of anything wrong with it) for the purpose of giving lectures and demonstrations in the bee tent on "Successful Beekeeping."

ADVANTAGES & METHODS OF QUEEN REARING BY HONEY PRODUCERS.

In swarming season and the honey flow, we should now have a general plan of operations mapped out. All hives, supers and appliances should now be in readiness. Every colony of bees should be doing its part toward multiplying and replenishing the earth. The great problem is swarm-control. Last month we considered the super as one of the factors. Another factor is the queen. A young, vigorous queen of select parentage and of select mating is the great thing in any system. To have one of these in every colony means easier swarm control, and more honey. It also means queen rearing or else it means a wholesale system of queen buying and introduction. Which shall it be?

Shall Queen Rearing go hand in hand with Honey Production?

The honey producer naturally has a lively interest in the improvement of his stock. He is likely to have a better ideal as to the most desirable qualities to be developed in his bees. He is in better position to select breeding stock with such qualities, than is the queen breeder specialist, but the most rapid development of these qualities in a strain of bees cannot result from the usual haphazard, hit or miss methods. Scientific principles must be applied. Queens must be bred not simply reared, and their mating must be brought under control.

I know of no way to accomplish this except to requeen annually, as far as possible, every drone producing colony within a given area of four or five miles radius from one selected mother, each year. By running the mating yard near the centre of this area, we may pretty nearly know how our queens are mated.

Here again the honey producer with a bunch of out-apiaries is often in the best

position to manage the situation, especially if he is able to enlist the co-operation of his near neighbours.

The swarming mania is the greatest menace to the production of comb honey in out-apiaries. Nature is insisting upon reproduction, and she has brought together her happiest combination of favorable conditions to this end. Those bees are "just dying" to reproduce their kind. That is just the thing we need to have done, but we are not ready for that; we are running for honey. Nature must be thwarted. Her heated passions must be cooled off or shaken out. Why not harness them and let them work out their own purpose and ours at the same time?

But the successful honey producer is not necessarily adapted to this different kind of work. To follow both lines involves a wider range of operations. More and different supplies are required, and the advantages of specializing are and the advantages of specializing are apt to be curtailed if one person undertakes to carry each department alone, which, by the way, is not according to modern ideal methods. Specialty and co-operation must go hand-in-hand.

To sum up this discussion, there are good reasons why the honey producer should rear his own queens, and there are good reasons why he should not do so and there is a strong recommendation in favour of co-operation and specialization. Let each decide between them for himself and his locality.

How to secure Queen Cells.

Other things being equal, I think that Nature's method of rearing queen cells under the swarming impulse is a little ahead of all others. These reared under the superseding impulse may be just as good, but as yet we do not know how to rear a large number of queens from one mother without departing just a little bit from Nature. We must use larvae that have hatched in worker cells, and we

must use queenless bees to start them as queens for the first day. These queenless bees may however be directly from a colony bent on swarming, or superseding, and so right in the spirit of the business. The slight deviation from Nature need not be any detriment, and after the cells are once started I see no reason why Nature may not be followed to the letter.

The following plan for starting cells I followed in the '80's in commercial queen rearing, and I have never had as good success with any other method. The grafting of larvae into artificial cell cups has its advantages, but for me it is too slow and uncertain. It may be that some others, like myself, are inclined to be a little awkward or clumsy, and can succeed better with my plan.

The selected larvae is left undisturbed in the worker cell in which it hatched from the egg. The cell is not cut into nor crushed, but it is cut out from the surrounding comb, leaving attached to it only a portion of the adjoining cells, except that one or two whole cells are left on the other side of the septum, or in other words, on the other end of the little cylinders or blocks of comb. This other end is to be dipped into melted wax and the block is thereby to be attached to its support in the hive. Tough comb is used (that that has had brood in it,) and the circles are cut with the small blade of a knife, ground very thin, narrow and sharp.

Every other larva or egg in or on the block is destroyed with the head of a match, and it is then laid in order on a board or tray, seeing that the larva cells all point one way.

When we have 30 or 40 of these for each cell-starting colony we have prepared, light the lamp over which is fastened a shallow tin of wax and resin, half and half of each. While it is melting, get ready the dummy-like frames in which to fasten the larva blocks. These are like brood frames except that they

are only $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick throughout, and the lower half is filled in by a half-inch board. That is the dummy part.

In the upper half is an open space in which two rows of larva blocks are to be suspended, one row on the underside of the top bar, and one on the underside of a half inch square stick two inches below.

The blocks are not stuck directly onto the wood, but onto little squares of tin which have been previously attached to the wood with wax in the same way. These tins are $\frac{3}{8}$ inch square after being folded double. They are spaced $\frac{3}{4}$ inch apart on the bars.

When the wax is melted, place a frame bottom up to your left, and the tray of larva blocks to your right with the larva ends from you. The wax dish is in front. Take a larva block between thumb and first finger and lower the near or vacant end into the wax $\frac{1}{4}$ inch and press it lightly upon its tin base. The septum will usually come down to within about $\frac{1}{8}$ of an inch of the tin. Leave one larva cell near the middle of each cell in such a position that it will point straight down when the frame is suspended in the hive.

Some may think it necessary to shave off the cell over the larva. Not so. The bees prefer to do that themselves, and will do so to their liking, and form the cup also.

One of these frames of larva is to be suspended in each colony that has been previously prepared to receive it. These colonies, must, of course, be queenless and void of any other unsealed larvae. They should also be possessed with the queen rearing passion.

It is better to have a comb of sealed brood on each side of the cell frame. The thinness of the frame allows just room enough between these combs for the cells to be built, while there is free communication over all parts, and no vacant spaces.

In 24 or 36 hours all accepted larvae will be still there, and there will appear the familiar signs of royalty. They may be left to mature where they are, or they may be inserted elsewhere for complete development; carried to another apiary if it is so desired, and utilised to requenee in any of the well known ways.—Oliver Foster, in *Beekeepers' Review*.

PRODUCING BOTH COMB AND EXTRACTED HONEY IN THE SAME APIARY.

At one time I was a producer of fancy comb honey, not in a very large way, but in a field capable of producing the very best. I gave up comb honey production some years ago for the reason that I believed I could make a greater profit from the same amount of labour by running my apiaries for extracted comb only. There is, however, a field for comb honey production, and as more honey can be disposed of to the consuming public if it is supplied in both forms, comb honey should always be produced in quantities sufficient to supply the demand.

If one wished to engage in comb honey production here, he should make it a point to produce only No. 1 fancy, in quantities sufficient to make large shipments to distant markets. Producers who keep only a few colonies and produce only comb honey, have ruined the local market. They get very little more for it than we get for extracted.

I would not attempt to run an apiary exclusively for comb honey. I could not do so and carry out my plan; which I will now outline. The conditions necessary to the securing of fancy comb honey are strong colonies, good weather and a good flow. These conditions can nearly always be secured at the height of the white clover or basswood flow here in Wisconsin.

I would begin the season by placing extracting combs on all stocks. After the bees were well started, and other conditions were right, I would remove the extracting supers from the best colonies, and replace with comb honey supers, supplied with full sheets of extra thin foundation, with or without separators. I would not bother with bait combs; it is not necessary. I would use the standard eight-frame brood chamber; and such colonies as swarmed or had to be shaken to prevent swarming would be hived in a seven-inch brood chamber on inch starters, full sheets or combs; preferably starters. These "shallows" to be used as extracting supers the following year.

With these shallow brood chambers, about all the honey is stored in the surplus department; and, at the close of the season, the bees are returned to the old brood chamber which was left at the swarming time a mere nucleus, but has now a young queen and plenty of stores for winter. Closing up the season, I would again cover all colonies with extracting supers, thus avoiding unfinished and second grade comb honey.

Anyone of good ability could locate an apiary on any unoccupied field in Southern Wisconsin, and make a success of comb honey on the lines I have laid down, provided he would only secure a fancy grade in quantities sufficient to make shipments to a distant market. He would have to reach the large cities. If he could not do this, the business would not pay. The farmer beekeepers are a nuisance to the professional beekeeper, but perhaps they do some good by furnishing comb honey in the rough to local consumers at a price lower than the expert can afford. They do it simply because they depend on something for a living.

The production of fancy comb honey is one of the higher arts in agriculture, and is very interesting work, but the man

who is not situated to give close attention to details, or who wishes to run out-yards, would better produce extracted honey.—Harry Lathrop, in "Beekeepers' Review."

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS.

K. T., Camp Hill, writes: Very many thanks for the books, which reached me safely. There are a few questions I wish to ask you.

Q. From Guide Book—Excellent way to form nuclei—Place hatching brood and nearly ripe queen-cell in a bee-proof wire cage, and insert in strong colony. At what price, and where may I obtain half a dozen of these cages?

Ans. I am not aware that either Messrs A. Hordern & Sons or Messrs. F. Lasseter & Co. stock these cages, but they could be made to order.

Q. For uniting—"perhaps a safer way to unite is to remove one of the queens, then shake all of the bees into an empty box, and spray or sprinkle them with scented syrup." What scent is best, and what quantity is to be added to the syrup?

Ans. Essence of peppermint is generally used. Dissolve sugar or honey in water, to be just of a sweet taste, then add the peppermint essence by drops till you can taste its flavour pretty well, then use a spray. But it is hardly needed.

Q. Re "Honey Flow." Can it be possible that here the honey flow is on at present? Fruit trees are in bloom, and others, yet the changeable weather prevents the bees from leaving their hives. Is this the time of "honey flow" for which I should work up the bees, by better autumn-winter management, stimulative feeding and spreading of brood in spring?

Ans. This is hardly the time for a honey flow, the weather being cool, and the bees not numerous enough to gather much. The autumn management is the

beginning of the season to follow. Warm wintering is good, stimulative feeding hardly needed, and spreading of brood is generally more harmful than otherwise.

Q. In an old A.B.K., of October 15th, 1904, Mr. R. Beuhne says: "Where queens are well clipped it is of course not easy to keep count of their age." Can I by their wings detect the age of my queens?

Ans.: No, I keep a book wherein all particulars are noted, and I examine my hives say every three weeks, then I notice any change at once. I do not, besides, approve of clipping queen's wings, and if it is true that some believe they have bred non-swarmers, etc., then they ought to be able to breed queens without wings, so as to spare them the trouble to clip them, and evolution would be complete!

Q.: In same journal Ch. U. T. Burke says: Want of fresh pollen appears to be the chief cause of paralysis." Should I be careful not to give combs containing last year's pollen?

Ans.: So long as the pollen and comb is not fungied it is alright, but when it has a dewy appearance—better no pollen than bad.

Q.: When hiving a swarm must all frames contain foundation, or what percentage of frames may be brood combs? Will the bees remain if all the frames are filled with comb?

Ans.: I generally use only one frame with comb in it, the rest have starters of about an inch wide. A swarm usually builds worker cells, and it makes almost no difference in progress if starters only are used, but it saves the price of full sheets of foundation. But there is no harm in using all full sheets, provided they are well fastened. Only empty combs should be given if the hive is filled with comb, and the swarm will feel at home, but in such cases they may be ready to swarm again in six weeks or two months' time. Sometimes they do even if they have to build all comb.

THE GREAT IMPORTANCE OF THE LOCATION IN SUCCESS- FUL BEEKEEPING.

In the first place, I think there is no question but that where a beekeeper has to choose locations where there is but one source of pasture, if alsike clover is one of the sources available, he is wise if he chooses such a place, where this crop is raised extensively for its seed. I say for its "seed," as it is a fact that this plant often yields the best during the closing period of bloom, a time when the clover is nearly all cut in places where it is raised for hay alone. All my experience in keeping bees (which goes back as far as I can remember anything) in an alsike district, in addition to having been in touch with beekeepers not in such localities, confirms my belief that alsike is the most important honey plant that we have here in Ontario, and quite likely this may be true of some of the Northern States as well. Of late years, here in Ontario, many farmers are beginning to raise buckwheat, so that in places it is now possible to get locations where a light crop may be secured from this plant, in addition to the main stand-by—alsike clover. However, as pointed out by Mr. Townsend, it is not wise to have your "eggs all in one basket," and our experience during the past three years has made us very much aware of the fact.

Previous to the last three years, my average for seven years was 100 pounds per colony in three apiaries, one at home, one three miles to the north-west and another seven miles north-east. During the past three years these same yards have averaged only about 30 pounds per colony for that period, while locations due west of us, only ten miles away, have given double that yield, and yet in these places there was very little alsike raised, the honey being mainly from white clover. But, aside from the question of forage, weather conditions

had more to do with the difference in yields (probably was the whole cause) than any other factor. J. B. Hall once said to me that one shower may make the difference between a fair crop and no crop, and I have seen cases where this was literally true.

This brings out the point that it pays to have the bees scattered, even if they all have the same kind of pasture, and while it is much better to have different sources for honey, yet, if this is impossible, I still believe it pays well to have some of the apiaries quite a distance away, as it is a well-known fact, that while one section may be suffering with a drouth, another section 20 or 25 miles away may be having abundance of rain. This is particularly true during the honey season, as at that time of the year most of our moisture comes with thunder showers.

As to the profitable distances to have yards scattered, that largely depends as to where the good locations are, and to the facilities offered for going back and forth. In my own case we have fair service on a railway that runs into a good beekeeping section, and I am contemplating establishing one or more yards about 40 miles away. We can leave in the evening, after doing a day's work, and come home the following evening if necessary, and in a visit of that nature, not as much working time is taken up as is the case in driving seven or eight miles back and forth to an out-apiary nearer home.

It will be seen from what I have said that, keeping bees any considerable distance from home is as yet in the prospective stage with me, but I have not the slightest fear as to the outcome and advisability of the scheme; and I might add that if it had not been for the three successive poor years mentioned, an apiary or apiaries, 40 miles away from home would have been an accomplished fact before this. Knowing what I do now, it would have paid me any way, as

in two out of three years there have been good crops in the prospective locations. Am well aware, Mr. Editor, that yourself Mr. Townsend and others are successfully operating apiaries much farther away than the distance I have mentioned but in my case there is no necessity for going any farther.

While at the Detroit convention friend Hershiser, in a private conversation, strongly advised the establishing of apiaries quite a distance from home, saying: "It has paid me, and I want to see it pay you, and more than that I know it will pay you." Experience of such men as Townsend, Hershiser and others confirm this idea beyond a doubt, and while on inspection work I have frequently come across beekeepers situated in a poor location, when 15 or 20 miles away would be good, unoccupied territory, have wondered why they did not move their bees to the more favored places, as it certainly would pay under such circumstances. It might be asked why they do not move to these more favored locations, but home interests some times are of such a nature that this is almost impossible, and in these cases it would be wise for the beekeepers surrounded with poor pasturage for beekeeping to realise that it takes but little more trouble to look after bees some distance away on the line of a railway than it does to attend to yards nearer home where the horse and buggy have to be used. Some may say that I am not competent to speak on this matter, not having had an experimental knowledge, but I may say that often have I gone on these trips of inspection work, leaving in the evening, working all the next day, and returning on the evening train. That the same time could be applied in attending to one's own property goes without saying.

Now as to where to have the bees placed, is an important item, and well worth the emphasis given to it by Mr.

Townsend. Sheltered "nooks" as described by him, are splendid, but with us such spots are few and far between; however one of my yards is situated in just such a place, and in that apiary I often saw, as he says, bees carrying pollen freely when in other yards none would be flying. My other apiaries are all in apple orchards, and with the possible disadvantages of being subject to the snow drifting over the hives badly, I regarded such locations as first class. Next to the main source of honey available for surplus, by all odds the most important factor to determine the placing of the bees, is to have an abundance of spring feed near the apiary. I say "near" as I am convinced that often during the trying spring months of our Northern sections, when the only spring feed available for our bees is a long way off, such a source is a positive injury instead of a benefit. Bees, at that time of the year, are very eager to fly out in search of pollen, and they will leave the hives in threatening weather; while away during a temporary spell of sunshine, suddenly the sun goes under a cloud, the cold wind blows, and hundreds of pollen-laden bees perish in trying to reach their hives a mile or two away. We have this truth brought home to us most forcibly nearly every spring at our home yard, and I have seriously considered the advisability of moving this apiary, solely on account of this unfortunate condition. There is not the least bit of early spring feed near us, with the exception of a few acres of willows due east about a mile; this space being divided by a narrow strip of hardwood bush that the bees are obliged to fly over to reach the willows. Immediately east of this woods, and quite near the willows, is a small apiary on the site on which my uncle's large apiary formerly occupied.

Allow me to digress to say that for over 50 years this apiary, as well as my home yard, formerly owned by my grandfather, have both usually had from 100

to 200 colonies in them; if there are two other as long established, and as close together, apiaries in the country, I have yet to run across them.

To return: Every spring this apiary east of the woods and near the willows, booms away ahead of my home yard, and from observation I am positive that the source of pollen, so badly situated, is the sole cause of this condition. Many a time I have seen hundreds of pollen-laden bees lying dead on the road, where the bees had to fly over on their way home, and sometimes when we have had a long spell of weather with fleeting clouds and cold north winds, the strong colonies would be almost depleted of their field bees. On the other hand, the bees in the apiary east of the bush and near the willows would work away briskly during the sunny spells, and rush into the hives in a hurry when the sun went under a cloud, very little loss of bees occurring on account of their having such a short distance to fly. This has been the case ever since the source of our early pollen has been limited to this one lot of willows and alder, and while some of our springs are not as bad as others, as far as weather conditions are concerned, yet nearly every year the difference is so apparent, that with all the extra care available for the home yard, I can never get the bees there in as good shape as those at the other yards, where the early pollen is easy of access.

Just a word on overstocking. I believe that when a heavy flow is on from any source, that it is a hard job to overstock a locality for the time being, but the trouble is the heavy flows do not always come, and then again there are times when overstocking is a very easy matter; with us such times are in the early spring and late summer. Yet I believe that a great many places will support more bees than is generally thought to be the case. However, if I could keep

as many bees in one place as advocated by the late Mr. Alexander, I still believe that it would be more profitable to have the same lot of bees more widely distributed over the country. It may be that in the buckwheat sections of New York, and the sage districts of California, that very large single apiaries are more profitable than a number of smaller ones; indeed, the experience of well-known men in those places would seem to prove the matter conclusively, but here in Ontario, with our more varied weather conditions, the latter system will by all means prove the most remunerative.

In conclusion, I would say, that, as I see it, the ideal system of beekeeping, as a sole dependence for a livelihood, is to have the bees located so that they will have at least two main sources of surplus, and to have some of the yards far enough apart so that if only one source is available, there will be less liability of failure in all the yards in the same season, owing to the more varied conditions of the weather in different localities. With apiaries so situated, my advice to the number who are asking if beekeeping can be depended upon for a living, would be, as expressed by Mr. Townsend, when he says: "A group of three or four yards, in each of the mentioned localities, will put beekeeping on as firm a basis as a business proposition, as any agricultural pursuit, and is more in line with that old stand-by, 'mixed farming' than any other system of beekeeping that has come to my notice; for one is quite sure of a crop of honey at one, and usually at two, of the locations." And I might add that if one is adapted to the work, he will find beekeeping more fascinating than any other calling, whether it be professional or agricultural.—J. L. Byer, in "Beekeepers Review"

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