

For the CANADIAN BEE JOURNAL.

Excessive Swarming.

A GENERAL REPORT OF MUCH INTEREST.

THE season of 1889 is long past, and as yet I have sent no report of what success I had with my bees during the season, but it is perhaps better late than never. I commenced the season with 16 colonies all in good condition. They were taken out of cellar on the 8th of April and were soon at work carrying in pollen and honey. They worked well and bred up very fast and were nearly up to the swarming point when the cold wet weather of the latter part of May and beginning of June came, putting a stop to honey gathering and everything else for a time, leaving some of them on the verge of starvation. I had to give one colony some brood and honey from a stronger neighbor to save it from being completely starved. But when fine and warm weather did come, they went to work in earnest, both gathering honey and brood rearing, and they built up very fast. When they commenced swarming it was seemingly with a determination to multiply and replenish the earth in a short time, and I never saw such large swarms. One would almost wonder that a hive could hold them all. The first came off on the 8th of June the next on the 11th and after that it was swarming nearly all the time. I wanted honey rather than increase, and having read somewhere that by taking a frame or two of unsealed brood and honey from the parent colony, and putting them in the new hive with the swarm, and hiving them on the old stand, it would not only prevent the old colony from swarming again, but would also be sure to make the new swarm accept the situation and prevent them leaving the hive and absconding to the woods. Being also strongly advised by a friend to try it, I did so, with the result that although the old colony was not ready to swarm on the eighth day, the new one generally was. I did not know what to make of it, until I saw an article in the American Bee Journal, written by Mr. G. M. Doolittle, which showed me at once that instead of checking, I was stimulating the swarming fever by putting them in, exactly the same condition that they were trying to get away from, by leaving their old home. So it no longer puzzled me to make out why they swarmed just at the time when in my opinion they ought to be comfortably established in their new home. That was, that they found brood and honey there before them and having a laying queen, their first impulse naturally enough would be to start building queen cells and to make

"Elaborate arrangements in due form
As soon as possible to cast a swarm"

Well, they swarmed and swarmed and I kept putting them back, cutting out queen cells, and working the extractor on them, but do what I would, and they seemed willing to let me do anything without resistance. (that is, pointed resistance) swarm they would and did, for no sooner was one batch of queen cells destroyed than they would start another. So that the end of the season found me with 43 colonies all good and strong, after all the putting back and considerable doubling up that had been done, one of which, however, was a stray swarm which I had caught.

Besides the increase, I got 100 lbs of honey per colony, spring count, 1,200 lbs of extracted and 400 lbs of comb honey in one pound section a very good yield considered along with an increase of about 175 per cent, and besides I have a lot of filled combs on hand, saved to give a start in the spring to any colonies that may consume an unusual amount during the winter I have them all in the cellar and they are doing well so far, the temperature is from 45° to 50° a little higher on account of the mild winter weather we are getting than I would wish to have it; but as the cellar is well ventilated, the slight excess of heat may do no harm, although last winter they came out in splendid condition with the temperature averaging 5° or 6° lower.

I started last spring with eleven colonies of Italians, and five of common blacks, and determined to get rid of the blacks on account of their irritability and disagreeable habit of boiling out of the hives every time they are opened and now all are Italians except one colony, and two or three Hybrids through their queens being mismaled. I am giving Carniolans a trial. I have four colonies with Carniolan queens, but on account of getting them late in the season, have nothing to say of their good or other qualities this time, only that any time I looked to see what they were doing, I always found them on the combs, and not trying to run away and hide in the corners or somewhere else. They are very quiet and although dark, are as easy to find on the combs as Italian queens, and I have much hope that they will prove a valuable acquisition though to beat some of my Italians they must get up in the morning as I have one strain or family of Italians (if I may use the term) that are hard to beat. I got the queen two years ago with some bees from a neighbor, and after finding out her good qualities, inquired of him where he got her, or if he had raised her himself. He told me that he thought she was one of a lot he