

IMPORTANCE OF RE-QUEENING

H. G. Sibbald and J. J. Hurley, at the O. B. K. A. Convention.

A number of years ago I had an experience with feeding back to finish up comb honey. I produced a lot of comb honey and always had a number of unfinished sections, and I would put up two or three cases of sections to a colony and feed back to have them completed. I noticed then as soon as a colony got a swarming fever the bees would not take any more feed down or build any more comb. I have noticed more and more ever since just as soon as a queen begins to slacken up in her laying that the colony will slacken up in its working energy, and a queenless colony will not work equal to a colony having a good laying queen. This led me to observe from time to time the difference between a colony with a good queen and a colony with a poor queen, or a queenless colony. I think there is half as much difference in the work accomplished by a poor queen in the hive. Later on when I had occasion to go round amongst the bee-keepers and farmers I again noticed the degenerate stock that there was throughout the country. All these things have led me to place a good deal of importance on the subject of queen rearing and re-queening.

There are very few bee-keepers outside of some that attend our conventions, that pay any special attention to their queens. A great many bee-keepers never had a queen cage.

Winter losses are from several causes. I think, perhaps half as much loss comes from poor queens or queenless colonies and those that have drone layers, and they come out in the spring with the usual result; they are very little use. Winter them as well as you like, and you are one colony less. In wintering, a colony that is queenless won't winter well, or one that has a poor queen. They know there is something wrong, and they will try to

supersede right in the cellar, and in outside wintering I haven't any doubt they will do the same.

As we run bees in a large way and keep them going for all they are worth, a queen doesn't last long. Mr. Pettit pointed that out. If we have an early flow of white honey only, the queen lasts longer, than if we have a fall flow.

I think re-queening is one of the most important things bee-keepers have to consider. The queen end of the bee business is more neglected by the general bee-keeper than any other part of the business.

Every bee-keeper should learn to produce queens for himself. It is all right to buy queens to improve your stock. At any time you notice a failing queen she should be immediately changed for a good laying queen.

The next important thing is the strain. There is very little use in changing the queen unless you make an improvement. It is a very good trade to trade off an old queen for a young one. It wouldn't be a very bad thing to do it every year. You could afford to pay quite a bit of difference on the bargain. A young queen is worth a good deal more than an old queen and is not so liable to fail. Some people advocate raising queens from swarming colonies and natural queen cells and so on. The great objection I would have to that is that in raising our queens from swarming colonies we are encouraging the swarming propensity, and in a large apiary, or for a man that has more apiaries than one, the swarming tendency is a very big fault; and even a small bee-keeper can get far better results if he can keep his bees from swarming altogether and keep them working right along. I would never advise anyone raising queens from cells that were raised under the swarming impulse. As far as I know this year we did not keep a cell that was raised under the swarming impulse. We raised all our queens from colonies that

did not swarm out, and I think a great extent in this tendency, help to us. Very early it is impossible to let them increase we have any destroy them.

The opinion have experience is that Italian other bees to has been my quality is the strain. If a collector gather lots of what strain they It is honey we select for our bees that are get this always is not advisable from one man. in buying new bought the first and notice do. I have heard themselves that \$100 if they put into their yards strains until you than, or as good

On red clover bees that would colonies that would seem to gain a really filled a strain. The strain of ability to get buskwheat honey were just as good Italians. It is handle a colony punishment. a good thing to do. If we can get it and have the quiet, I would