

The Canadian Bee Journal

Published Monthly

New Series
Vol 14, No. 6

BRANTFORD, CAN., JUNE, 1906

Whole No
475

NOTES AND COMMENTS

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Systematic Re-queening.

Will it pay the bee-keeper to destroy queens over two years old, or is it best policy to leave the matter to the bees? Doolittle, Dadant and others have placed themselves on record as in favor of leaving the matter of supercedure to the bees' "judgment," and the late Editor Hutchinson has expressed himself in like manner. Yet, in the face of such formidable testimony, the writer is forced to the conclusion that from the way his bees act, he would certainly pay him to be more systematic in the matter of re-queening. After clipping queens and generally overhauling all colonies, I find an actual count that out of 270 odd colonies just 34 are either queenless or had drone layers. Of these 34 I happen to know that 32 gave good brood for the last season. Of the remaining two, one was poor last season and the other was bought from a dealer in September. This spring she was queenless. Last spring my loss by the same causes was about 10%. Of course, it should be borne in mind that I have had practically no swarming during the past two seasons. It certainly appears quite plausible

to assume that if those 34 colonies had young queens at their head this spring, that they would be a much better-paying proposition than is the case in their present condition. However, as I had no other winter losses, if there had been no queenlessness, would have had no empty hives for possible swarms. Seriously speaking, though, this matter of re-queening is easier spoken of than practised, if you have little swarming and happen to live in a locality with no fall flow. It is an easy matter to keep track of age of queens when clipping is practised, but a much harder job to catch old queens about the time you would like to dispose of them. Whenever a swarm issues headed by a queen two years old or over, I make it a point to see that she never enters the hive again. As already intimated, during past two years have had little chance for such work.

Wintering of Nuclei.

Some time ago we mentioned the fact of having 20 nuclei in winter quarters, vaguely hinting that said "quarters" were of a questionable nature. They were put under an ordinary basement barn, in a room entirely surrounded by straw to keep out the light, and, judging by conditions, when bees were taken out, the straw kept out the cold as well as the light, as quite a large percentage of the bees had left the hives and perished. However, 17 were taken out