

FOR THE CANADIAN BEE JOURNAL.

New System of Handling Bees.

FRIEND JONES.—Since writing my article published in your issue of Nov. 1st, page 678 and 679, inclusive, I have read your further explanation of the "new system of handling bees." As I understand the manipulation outlined by you, I do not have to guess that the plan will give good results, for it is so nearly like my "queenless system" of six or seven years ago that I am able to decide in advance what is in it. The distinctive difference between the Alpaugh system and my "queenless system" consists mainly in the one point, viz., Mr. Alpaugh heads his surplus workers with a queen, while I only give mine a bit of comb with larvae to keep them in heart, but never permitted them to have a queen. By this management I utilized the extra force of bees in the production of surplus honey, and come through the season with the same number of colonies I commenced with.

If I understand the Alpaugh system, it must necessarily increase the colonies 50 per cent. each season, unless the increase is wiped out by uniting during honey season, or at the close of it. Then, again, the Alpaugh plan requires the handling of three colonies to run one surplus colony. This is a serious objection to it, and is the main cause that induced me to abandon it, for my new and more simple system. In practising my new system, the preparation consists of one single manipulation as described in my article in your issue of Nov. 1st. And after the colony is thus prepared, it is managed just like any strong colony is managed on the tiering up plan. I do not wish to leave the impression that it requires little judgment and skill to practice my new system, for such is not the fact. It requires good judgment to make it work uniformly. If the hives are prepared at the beginning of the swarming season there will be no swarms unless they are induced by very old queens, not very old "combs," as the printer makes me say in my article on page 679, the tenth line from top of the page. I want to make this correction because I have been trying for several years to impress apiarists with the fact—without much success, that the presence of an old queen in the hive is the greatest of all inducements to swarm. When a swarm issues on this account, the best thing to do is to destroy the old queen and give the colony a young laying queen or a queen cell nearly ready to hatch. This will satisfy the bees.

I have labored for a number of years to formulate a controlling system that would en-

able me to keep a given number of colonies, and have to handle just that given number of colonies to accomplish it. My new system does it when taking honey with the extractor in the more satisfactory way. And after I learned the art of "feeding back" and thereby converting the liquid honey taken from the extra set of combs after the brood is all hatched above the queen excluder, into section comb honey, I have found it equally satisfactory for taking comb honey.

If I am not mistaken, as practical a man as is Brother Jones, he has advised against "feeding back" to have partly filled sections finished. And I think he says that "fed back honey" will candy in the combs. How is this, friend Jones? Have you never experimented along this line till you know how to do it? I would be pleased to show you some cases of sections produced in this way. The combs are as white as this sheet of paper I write upon, and as straight as a board, and the honey don't candy. If the "feeding back" is done immediately after the white honey harvest is over, at a time when the weather is warm, and the honey to be fed back diluted with water a day in advance of going into the feeders, there is very little danger of it candying in the combs. In a climate like our's in Kentucky, there is no trouble about it at all. In a cold climate it may be best to put the honey thus finished on the market as early as it will be taken. The fact is, in my location when all the surplus must come from white clover, and every season is beset with danger of being cut short by one or more of the many causes that may shorten the honey yield, I was never able to produce comb honey in profitable marketable shape till I learned the art of feeding back liquid honey to have the sections all finished.

It would be quite interesting to learn just what proportion of the $4\frac{1}{2}$ sections that go on the hives annually, are finished up in marketable shape. I really doubt if three-fourths, or even one half of them, taking the country over, are finished in good marketable shape. Every experienced apiarist has at some time, if not often, seen his bees booming in his section cases, with hundreds of sections growing like the touch of magic, and has fairly held his breath. A few more days and then—but the "few more days" are swallowed up by a sudden change of weather, it may be a hot wave, or a cool "easter," or it may be a patter down of rain every day, and every hour, and the booming is over for the season, and he asks, "what am I going to do with all these partly-filled sections?"