

GENERAL.

FOR THE CANADIAN BEE JOURNAL.

Something More About Foreign Bees.

MR. EDITOR.—In your issue for July 15, page 589, you refer to a curious bee story and to a most remarkable find of more than a ton and a half of honey hanging to the branches of a giant Eucalyptus tree. It seems to me a most absurdly exaggerated statement. If there had been such a find we would have heard of it here surely. Then imagine a hive of honey weighing one and one half tons, hanging to branches in this climate, where in the shade the temperature reaches 114° Fahr. heat in summer as far south as this colony, and in the north very much higher at times, I believe. When we speak of shade it should be borne in mind that the eucalyptus do not give that deep and pleasant shade, we remember in the backwoods of old England, but hang their long narrow leaves point downward and edge outward to the sun.

Imagine this hive of thirty cwt. falling in the hot weather of swarming time, as described, a height of 250 feet, through numerous other branches, knocked this way and that, to meet the ground a streaming, broken mass; then to say, "he found the hut weighing over a ton and one half, of delicious honey, it is absurd! Why, Sir—a drop of ten feet would put such a thing as computing weight out of the range of possibility. It's being there, in a climate like ours, where an unwired L frame is, when heavy, apt to lose its contents, however well ventilated, is absurd to think of its falling 250 feet, and then being weighed is doubly so!

As for the bees, sir, "these bees and their habits" on which you wish for information in your foot note and the only bees out here of any practical use whatever are those you know so well, the imported black and other races of Europe. There are insects about the size of a horse fly, but more slender termed "native bees" about here. They visit us at extracting time and often we find them on the windows, but I have never seen their home. They have no sting, have small abdomens for the size of their heads and thorax, as compared with the common bees. I once saw a swarm of them alight but not cluster, in all, about enough to fill an egg cup if crowded together I should say. They stayed over night on a grass-tree (*ysicca*) but cleared off next morning. For honey gatherers, under the control and care of man the native bee of Australia has to be found yet. The "wild bees" are escaped swarms of Black

and Italian strains. They are a fruitful source of spreading foul-brood as there is no restriction upon any cutting down bee trees even close to an apiary, and leaving foul-brood combs lying scattered around. We need some of the wisdom and energy of the law of Ontario and its working, down in these colonies, which possess a splendid bee pasturage, equal to anything, I should say, that we read of in America. Enterprise in bees is hindered by the ignorance of box-hive men and others who do not know the danger of foul-brood, and often don't care, when we point it out. We keep it out by at once boiling hives and frames on its appearing, and giving the bees a clean start, without starving generally. In this continent we have no winter troubles, and so far, in Victoria, no bee-moth. The bees to take a sample season, breeding all winter slightly, build up in September, and swarming is in full swing in October and November. We get in this apiary a dearth following till January, when the eucalyptus commence to bloom. Last season we had 90 colonies increased to 120, on January 13th began our harvest from eucalyptus *rostrata* or red-gum, one of the best of the eucalyptus for honey, and timber for rough heavy work out doors. We took each week 20 cwt, 11 cwt, and 25 cwt, till we reached five tons. After this on a slight honey flow till May building up nucleus colonies, rearing queens, etc. After two months of winter we begin this season with 150 good colonies. Besides the eucalyptus we have various acacias, many varieties of *epacris* and *styphetia*, (no clover here) and wild flowers all the winter in profusion. The red-gum blooms every alternate year. Some of the eucalyptus bloom every year, one of these eucalyptus *oblique*, or *mesmate gum*, being a good source of honey.

First examination is generally the first week in August, the last took in May and June, A longer season than yours, is it not?

The yucca mentioned above is a fairly good source of honey. When swept off by fires in the forests, they spring up with flower stalks six feet long, one mass of tiny flowerets round the stalk which is four inches in diameter tapering to nothing at the point. One stalk to each bush or root. Hoping this will be of interest.

Yours faithfully,

T. BOLTON

Dunkeld, Victoria.

We are pleased to be able to give the above information to our readers, and trust that our friend will favor us with further communications from that far distant country. Perhaps he would