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SUGAR AS A WINTER FEED FOR BEES.

MY article in the CANADIAN BEE JOURNAL on the subject of feeding sugar to bees has brought me more letters of commendation than any article I have written for a year past. It has also brought out articles from the pens of other writers, and the ball is set rolling. Mr. Geo. A. Wright, in February *Gleanings* says he knew a man to feed sugar to have unfinished sections completed and then sold them for honey. It has been the mistaken policy of some good meaning bee-keepers to keep the matter of adulteration in the background. I think there never was a greater mistake than this. The time is at hand when the reputation of the bee-keeper will have to be the standard of purity of the article he offers to sell. It must be clear to every mind that no bee-keeper can establish a reputation for honesty and conscientious dealing by hiding fraud under a bushel. Ten years ago the masses knew nothing of adulterated honey. The reader will please note the terms I use. They were aware of "artificial" honey being exposed for sale, and would buy it to a limited extent, but they never dreamed that bees could be employed to adulterate their own products. It was left to sugar feeding to teach them this "science." Some time ago an acquaintance of mine told me of a man in Indiana who kept his bees in a bee house, and employed them to "make honey" all winter by supplying them with sugar as the "raw material." I knew the man was laboring under a delusion and was ignorantly spreading the hurtful story among the people, and for this reason I carefully explained to him that the Indiana bee-keeper was simply feeding his bees on sugar syrup to keep them from starving till the spring blossoms would give them a living. I soon saw that this explanation was not satisfactory, it was taking the romance out of a good story, and the physical fact that sugar had been taken into that bee house, out-weighed in his mind all the explanations that I could make in favor of the opposite conclusion. The increase of the bee and honey business under our blind policy is swelling the sugar trade to immense proportions. Five years ago such a state of

things could not have been conceived of, or seen by unprophetic eyes. I would like to impress the minds of bee-keepers with what I believe to be a reasonable conclusion. It is this, if all the bees in the care of modern bee-keepers had subsisted solely on their own products for the two past years, there would to-day be a fair demand for all the honey that could be put on the market.

Now permit me to say a few words about sugar as winter food for bees. From some tests of mine not very carefully made. I have heretofore admitted that pure sugar syrup was the equal of honey as a winter food for bees. But having tested the matter more carefully this winter I have reconsidered the matter and now decidedly pronounce in favor of honey for this climate. Last fall I prepared several colonies on clean combs and fed them on pure sugar syrup. Several more were prepared in the same way and fed with extracted honey diluted with warm water. One colony was induced to store all the sorghum syrup that they would take. The rest of my apiary had natural stores just as the bees had fixed it up. The winter was mild up to the 8th of January and the bees were on the wing every few days. Well, on the afternoon of the 8th of January the great snow storm reached us and it turned wonderfully cold for this climate. For four days the mercury never rose above zero, and went down to 16 below on the morning of the 11th of January. Taking the four days together they were perhaps the coldest ever known here. My bees were in single wall hives without any packing. All my fine breeding queens, including the one I have from Brother D. A. Jones, were in colonies that had no protection except a quilt over the frames. These were on the standard L. frames. And besides these I had bees wintering in my shallow sectional hive the cases being only 5½ inches deep. The bees confined to a single case on frames 5 x 17½. These bees had a woolen quilt over the frames and an empty case set on, and the hive cover on the latter. Well, during those terrible ninety-two hours with the mercury below zero every hour and minute of the time, I walked time and again through the apiary hoping to catch some sound of life, to verify what we have been so often told about bees rousing up and exercising themselves to raise the heat in the hive. But all was as still as a grave yard, day and night—for I was there in the night time too. Looking after "science" you know. On the 14th day of January the sun came out warm, though the snow covered the ground completely, and the bees had a general fight. To my surprise (but very agreeably so) every colony that had natural stores were in good