

WINTERING IN CLAMPS.

E. J. BERRY.—Will you kindly help me to decide which is the best way to winter my bees? I have a very poor cellar, and I think I shall try to winter them in clamps out of doors. I will give you the plan I proposed carrying out. About the 15th November I shall put say 15 colonies in a row four to six inches apart and raised one foot from the ground, pack underneath the hive with chaff or planer shavings. I will then put boards in front and back of the hives, leaving a space of six inches all around for packing, and I will put the same amount on top, making a slanting roof over the entire clamp to shed the water. Do you think this packing will be sufficient for this province, it being much colder than in Ontario? I find upon weighing my colonies on 15th October that each had 15 to 20 pounds of sugar syrup made from sugar almost white, next grade to granulated. Do you think that the bees will winter safely on this food? Would colonies have sufficient feed, i. e., 15 to 20 pounds, to carry them through until such a date next spring as it would be safe to unpack them to see how they had wintered? About what date next spring would you estimate the above quantity of feed would last to with safety? Both chaff and planer shavings being procurable, which would you advise me to use? All my colonies are in splendid condition, and I would very much like to winter them successfully.

Brome Corners, Que., Oct. 18, 1890.

I think you had better put six inches of packing in front and nine at least behind and on the sides. Would prefer at least a foot of chaff on top unless it was very fine chaff, clover or timothy, and then held down firmly so that the heat cannot escape easily. Six inches would be sufficient on top but you can easily set the escape board in front of the entrance of your hive on a slant of say about 45 degrees, so that the packing would not be very deep just at the entrance, but get deeper until it got to be say nine inches at the top of the hive. We would prefer if chaff was easily got or dry sawdust, to use a foot on the inside and eight or nine inches in the bottom, but if you bank up with snow after the first fall, that will assist very much in keeping up an even temperature. If you have a few warm days yet, would advise you to give each one a little more food, as 15 pounds is very light for outdoor wintering. Sugar syrup no doubt is equal if not better than honey, especially fall honey, but good clover or basswood honey is perhaps as good as sugar syrup. You had better examine them the first warm days in spring, say March or April, to see that they are not starving. Should you find any of them lacking stores you

could take a comb and pour good warm, thick sugar syrup in it, and set it down next to the cluster where they could get it. This would keep them even though they were out of food until the warm weather set in. We would also advise you to keep them packed until the fruit bloom, as this year where bees were not thoroughly packed or kept warm in the spring they suffered from the unfavorable weather. I scarcely know which is best, chaff or planer shavings. I think I would prefer the chaff. You might try one end of your clump with shavings and the other end with chaff, but be sure the shavings are packed very tightly, otherwise it would require much thicker packing to keep out the cold. The finer the chaff the better. If you can get clover chaff, which is quite plentiful in some localities, it is much better than wheat or oat chaff. Let me repeat that banking up the bees with snow is a good investment. If you pile the snow on top of your clamp three feet deep all the better. I have never known bees to die in winter quarters if they were in good condition in the fall, under the snow, but I have known many apiaries where part of the colonies were covered with snow and the rest not, those covered with snow, wintered splendid, while those not died or came through weak, and perhaps dwindled badly in the spring. You need not be afraid of smothering them, even though you should get the snow six feet deep all over them, and they will consume less stores under a snow-bank than when in the open air.

MOVING BEES TO NEW LOCATION.

SUBSCRIBER.—I should like to enquire which will be the best time to move bees, this fall or next spring? I intend moving this winter, all except the bees, which I have thought best to leave where they are. I shall only be moving a distance of 2½ miles.

Derwent, Oct. 20, 1890.

I would advise you to move them next spring, as the combs will have much less honey in them, be much lighter, less liable to break down, and disturbing bees late in the fall seems to break their clusters, causes them to gorge themselves with honey, and they don't seem to get clustered as compactly and winter quite as well as they would if left undisturbed late in the season. Thanks for your report.