

LOSSES. THE SEASON. SMOKE.

Some twenty-four years ago I lost all the bees I had in wintering. I had about sixty colonies. They died of the bee-diarrhoea. As might be expected, that led me to look very carefully into the wintering problem. After that, during a period of perhaps ten or twelve years, my winter losses ranged from about fifteen per cent at first down to about five, and for the last dozen years or more about two to four per cent would cover winter losses, barring accidents, such as a colony or two turning out to be queenless when put into winter quarters, or occasionally a colony consuming an abnormal quantity of stores (30 pounds) and starving to death. But the past winter I lost some fifty colonies, about half my stock. "How was that?" The reader may ask. Well, it was thus: As most readers know, I was absent from home last season at the World's Fair in charge of the Ontario apiarian exhibit, and when I arrived home on December 23rd, I found my bees in very bad shape and ten colonies already dead. There had been zero weather as well as wet and stormy weather, and as they were still outside and unprotected the adverse conditions were playing havoc with them. The result this spring was not, therefore unexpected. However, things are booming now, and I shall soon have about as many bees again as I want. They have been on the Alsike clover about ten days, and yesterday (June 17,) the white clover showed itself, and the swarming goes steadily on. It was thought early in the season that the clover was about all winter and spring killed, and very much of it was, especially the Alsike and the red; but the white is showing up fairly well and the Alsike, of last year's seeding escaped the frost and is pretty good. As I sow the Alsike every year, I am fortunate this spring in having a considerable to fall back upon. While the nectar in the

Mammoth red is usually inaccessible to the bees, and the White frequently fails to yield even when there is a profusion of bloom, the Alsike I have never known to fail in its yield of nectar. It is therefore my favorite honey plant. Of course the linden or basswood stands alongside if not ahead, of the clover in Ontario as a honey producer, but the saw mills and paper mills, I am sorry to say, have swallowed up all in this district except scattering trees. I am looking forward, however, with pleasant anticipation to the time (if I do not shuffle off this mortal coil too soon) when my own basswood orchard of about five hundred trees, planted with my own hands, will be yielding up the precious sweet to the bees. The trees are looking well this spring and are growing rapidly.

Bees, so far as I have heard have wintered well and the Spring on the whole has been very favorable here in eastern Ontario. April was very fine and the Maple, Landelion and fruit bloom gave the bees an early and vigorous start. True, there was a cold, wet spell lasting some ten days, but it occurred just at the right time to do the bees least harm, between fruit bloom and clover bloom. On the whole the prospects are good for a fair crop of honey.

SMOKE—SMOKING—AND SMOKERS.

A good smoke, properly applied from the nozzle of a good smoker is one of the things in a bee-yard much to be desired. In a letter before me from a customer to whom I had supplied a colony of bees, he says he took the wire cloth from the entrance as directed, after placing them on their stand, but that he did not "do the rest" as the bees "chased him off," adding that he would "do the rest in the morning." A little smoke blown in at the entrance before taking away the wire net, would have obviated any necessity of "running away," and enabled him to finish fixing them up in their new home. And if he had no smoker a piece of rotten wood burning at