

For THE CANADIAN BEE JOURNAL.

Destroying Surplus Bees.

I AM disappointed in your comments on my letter re the Destruction of Bees. You made them without thoroughly understanding what I had written; and I shall in this reply try to be more explicit on those points which, it seems to me, you have not grasped, in case I have not been fully understood by other readers.

First, though, let me point out a typographical error in the third line on page 247 of my letter: that 200 combs should have been 2,000, as can be seen by the context.

You say that I have drawn the dark side of the picture very black. I fail to see it. Don't see that I draw a picture at all; and the nearest approach I detect to anything of the kind is something very bright. My letter was little more than a statement of facts and figures, and deductions made from them; and if these facts and figures, and deductions are correct, then the prospect of saving all our winter anxiety and of adding at the same time \$2.50 per colony to our profits is surely not "the dark side of the picture very black."

You say "from twenty to twenty-five pounds of good sealed stores will carry our colonies through in fine condition," and I admit that this is quite sufficient in many cases, (but not in all, by any means) and in some seasons to carry the bees from say Oct. 1st to fruit blossom the following spring. But to carry them from harvest to harvest requires very much more if we would have our bees strong in fall, and in the very best condition at the commencement of the succeeding harvest. Since, possibly, I did not make myself fully understood on this point in my letter I shall enlarge upon it now. The harvest seldom extends beyond the fifteenth of August, though in exceptionally favored localities it sometimes continues till the twenty-fifth or thirtieth; this year it closed in most sections soon after the fifteenth of July. But to give the bees all possible chance let us suppose that the close of the surplus storing season (this is what I mean by "harvest"), is September first. During September and early October brood raising is going on vigorously, or should be. In November we see that our bees have twenty-five pounds of good sealed stores, and we quarter them for the winter with little fear of starvation through shortage. But how much honey has been consumed from first of September till this time, especially during the period of brood rearing? You say yourself on page 248: "*But we should have to destroy our bees nearly as soon as the honey harvest is over or*

we would have to leave honey in the hives to support them between the various honey flows in the fall. In most localities there are little flows of honey for a few days from time to time in the fall from astors, mint, boneset, golden rod, &c., which keeps them brooding and supports them until it is time to set them in winter quarters;" and in this you admit that a quantity of honey is consumed (whether it be left for or gathered by the bees) between harvest and winter quartering. About how much is consumed is what I wish to point out. Surely twenty-five pounds is not too large an amount to allow for the month of vigorous brood-rearing, and ten pounds for the balance of the time—35 lbs. in all. Of this thirty-five pounds about what proportion will be used for brooding purposes alone? Not less than three-fifths; say twenty pounds. Now please note: If we intend to destroy our bees before winter we will not allow brood rearing after harvest, and will, therefore, save this twenty pounds. Add this twenty pounds to the 20 or 25 you winter on and you have the forty (45) pounds required to carry your bees from harvest to harvest; so that you cannot as you say "get over the difficulty with much less than forty pounds." But in my last letter I put this twenty pounds saved (by disallowing brooding) at only ten, so as to be well within the mark, on account of the skepticism of some of my fellow bee-men; and I consider even the twenty to be still within the mark, for I can show a saving of nearly twice that by a careful manipulation with fall destruction in view.

Now, all my figures are based upon a good season in a good locality, followed by a desirable winter and early spring, with a good yield from willow and fruit. But how very seldom of late years have we such a conjunction of good things. Suppose we have no fall flow, and find, as many of us have done time and again, when we weigh our colonies in November, that although they have more than ample (as we supposed) stores in September, they must yet be fed ten or fifteen pounds per colony. Suppose too, that such a fall be succeeded by a winter like the last, when bees consumed more stores than in any previous one, followed by a spring like that through which we have just passed, when in some localities bees had to be fed till clover yielded. Do you imagine that forty pounds would suffice to carry a strong colony from harvest to harvest? Of course you don't if you think carefully; this would not be nearly enough. I am sure there were very few good colonies in Ontario which did not consume at least sixty pounds between September 1st, 1889, and June 15th, 1890, if they were ready in best