

Moved by J. E. Frith, seconded by J. B. Hall, that the Secretary of this association get up blank forms for the affiliated societies to report their finances upon, and that the forms for general report have two columns added, so that there can be a report of how many colonies put into winter quarters, and how wintered.—Carried.

Mr. J. K. Darling read his paper, "Why is it?" bringing out many interesting points, and causing a profitable discussion.

### WHY IS IT?

By J. K. DARLING.

Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen:—When requested by the Secretary to prepare a paper for this meeting I did not know what to say in reply. My experience is not sufficient to warrant me in choosing a subject relating to apiculture and treating it as it ought to be treated. I thought I could not do better than note a few of the difficulties that I have met from time to time, some of which I have partly well overcome, while others remain as obstinate as ever. The object of this paper is not to show what little I know about beekeeping, but rather to string together a few of the difficulties that are more or less annoying to the majority of beekeepers, especially those who have not had experience enough to help themselves over these sand bars in the stream they have decided to float upon. I say "help themselves," for it is when a man is not able to help himself and has to depend on the information he gets from the books and periodicals devoted to apiculture, that his real troubles begin.

Why is it that the instruction given in this manner so often proves partially if not wholly useless to the novice who is trying to carve his way as a beekeeper?

Why is it that men like E. K. France aver that they can reduce swarming to a minimum and obtain large crops of honey by caging or removing the queen for a time during the honey flow? Whilst, if this plan was tried on by a novice, nine times out of ten he would have not only no swarms, but also a lot of sulky bees that would do nothing for him or themselves either, and would ball their queen when returned or when let loose if she had been caged on top of the frames.

Why is it that others, like G. M. Doolittle (a very great misnomer, I think), declare that there is no way that they can get as good crops as by natural swarming? Yet, if a novice tries to follow their plan, he would be likely to have more swarms than honey.

Why is it that the majority of writers advise keeping the queens doing their level best?—Professor Cook going so far as to advise having laying queens ready to put in a hive after it has swarmed, so that no time be lost, while the experience of a great number of beekeepers shows that a larger quantity of honey is stored when there is no brood to feed for ten to fifteen days, than there is when the colony is kept raising bees that may be good for nothing except to consume the stores that have been laid up for winter use.

Why is it that some of those very prolific queens sometimes prove to be the poorest stock a man has in his yard?

I remember one such case in my own yard some years since. There was one colony,—a prime swarm,—that pleased me very much; *always at it*, and when I would lift the sheet off the frames everything appeared lovely. In a short time I began extracting, and took a lot of honey from other colonies; but when I came to my favorite, what did I find? Twelve "Jones" frames solid with brood, with a little honey along the top bar; not ten pounds of honey in the hive. Everything was converted into brood, and that in July, when it was not wanted in anything like that quantity.

Why is it that some writers will tell you to "crowd" the bees below in order to drive them into the sections (is this not the advice generally given to the inexperienced)? And yet, if the "crowding" is done by some other than the writers, they swarm,—that is, the bees swarm and not the writers, and the game is up. While at the same time these very writers, if asked how to prevent swarming, would say, "Give plenty of room."

Will the veterans stand up and be catechised on this point for the benefit of the order?

Why is it that some men claim to make a success of living on starters, and allowing the bees to build their own combs, and advise others to do the same, while nine out of ten would have their brood nests filled with drone comb and their colonies ruined?

Why is it that tiering up is practised successfully by a great many beekeepers, and yet there are hundreds who cannot induce their bees to do anything above the brood nest; at least a majority of their colonies prefer cooling themselves on the piazza instead of filling the vacancy above their sleeping apartments?

Why is it that some can manage to get fine sections without queen excluders, while the majority of us would have brood and pollen in the sections, *galore*, unless we confined her majesty in her proper quarters?

In short, Why is it that so much of the