

For THE CANADIAN BEE JOURNAL.

BRANT BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION.

The meeting of the Brant Beekeepers' Association was held at the Court House, Brantford, April 15, 1893. The attendance was good, the meeting having been well advertised, and owing to the fact that Mr. F. A. Gemmell (president of the Ontario Beekeepers' Association) was expected to be at the convention.

After a good deal of business was dispatched, the President, R. F. Holtermann, called upon Mr. Gemmell for an address upon the important subject of Building up Colonies for the Honey Flow. In his introductory remarks, the President stated that much valuable information might be expected from Mr. Gemmell, he being not only an extensive practical beekeeper, but a great reader as well of apicultural literature.

Mr. Gemmell stated that plenty of stores were necessary of the best liquid capped honey. Very little tinkering should be done until the pollen came in. Natural pollen was the best; otherwise, he fed artificial, as he thought it kept the bees at home. He inverted several covers to hives, feeding rye or graham flour. He did not know whether the bees used all they stored or not, but he never saw any clogging of stores from pollen. Feeding through a feeder he did not advocate, as solid sealed combs were the best. If a strong colony was short of stores it was a good plan to use a feeder daily,—an ordinary gin jar with a perforated tin cover would answer. The jar should be covered about with chaff or straw. Cut a hole in the quill, and put a wooden frame covered with wire cloth over the whole; this would prevent the bees from getting through the hole whilst they were able at the same time to get at the syrup through the wire cloth. He fed them with sugar syrup, composed of equal quantities of sugar and water mingled with a little honey. It should be remembered, however, that although honey is a far better food than anything else for stimulative

purposes, it leads to robbing. Mr. Gemmell stated that he preferred sealed combs between fruit and clover blooms some advocated feeding; but when this practice was resorted to the bees were very liable to swarm, and that just when they should begin to store supplies. This is particularly the case in regard to comb honey.

Question by Mr. C. Edmanson:—Do you ever spread brood?

Mr. Gemmell:—I never spread brood unless I am sure there is no danger of chilling, say after 1st June. If not done properly it is a very dangerous operation, which most beekeepers have failed to make a success of. I sometimes turn in the outer side of the outside brood combs; this spreads the chamber but a very little at a time.

Question by Mr. John Charlton:—How much do you give them in the fall?

Mr. Gemmell:—I believe in giving them plenty,—even forty pounds. They will make good use of what is left over winter in the spring, and then spring feeding will not be necessary. I do not believe in building up weak colonies at the expense of the strong. If anything is done in this direction, it should be by taking combs from other weak colonies, giving out of these weak colonies some strong others very weak.

Question by Mr. James Shaver:—What do you do with second swarms?

Mr. Gemmell:—I seldom, if ever, have them.

Mr. F. J. Davis, Cainsville, thought Mr. Gemmell had done very well. They kept swarming down without great difficulty. They took many brood combs from the colonies in the fall giving them sealed combs of honey. They wintered them on their summer stands and left the outside packing on the hives until the bees hung out; they then unpacked them, gave them more room, and cut out the queen cells. He thought when a colony was weak the queen was deficient. He then kills the queen and puts the first swarm on the combs. The colony would then be ready for the basswood flow.