

Thursday, 16th, 2 p.m.

OVER-STOCKING LOCALITIES.

BY MR. C. W. POST.

The above topic has been discussed freely for the last few years, and after all said and done we cannot find an apiarist to say just the number of colonies that can be kept in any certain locality to be of the greatest profit to their owner.

There are several obstacles to prevent us from ever knowing the greatest number of colonies that can be profitably kept in one locality for a term of years. A locality may produce a very large amount of honey-producing flora one year, and secrete nectar in abundance, and the next year the very opposite results may follow. Then again, if the following season was just as favorable for honey-producing flora, the elements in the great laboratory of nature may be against the secretion of nectar.

Now, in the former case, there would be very little danger of over stocking, while in the latter, even a few colonies would secure a very scanty supply. I don't think that there is an apiarist in this or any other country but will admit that any locality can be over-stocked, but to the extent that this can be carried on with the greatest profit is what we are all looking to for more knowledge.

For the last ten years I have been running out apiaries and always have an average colony on scales, and for the last two years I compared the daily gain with colonies in small apiaries (other conditions being as nearly equal as we could get them), and in both cases they were equal.

In 1891 I placed one hundred colonies in a locality already stocked with the same number, in fact they were in the same yard. There was a small apiary of about 19 colonies about three miles away; each apiary had a colony on scales and the average daily gain was about the same. Through the basswood flow on favorable days, the gain was from 6 to 15 lbs. a day and for a few cool, chilly days neither of them gained an ounce.

The following season, 1892, I tried it on a much larger scale. I was running three out apiaries, and I moved them all home to Weller's Bay for the buckwheat flow. At that time I had 350 colonies, and three other apiarists moved 175 colonies and placed them along with mine, making 525 colonies in my apiary. At that same time I had a friend, 7 miles from me to the west, with 90 colonies, localities about the same. We each had a colony on scales and kept a daily record, and it was surprising to see how nearly alike the average

daily gain was. My best three days in succession, gave an average of 10 lbs. per day, while my friend to the west, got 81 lbs. in the same time. Then again there were several days in succession that neither of them gained one ounce; thus showing that as much depends on climate conditions as on the blossoms.

In the above tests, my localities were not over-stocked, but how much more they could have stood would be mere theory to say.

In locating out apiaries I don't think it pays to have less than from 125 to 150 in the same yard. And if it should be somewhat over-stocked I don't think the loss would be as heavy as the extra expense in running them in two different apiaries, this to apply for a term of years.

Trenton, Dec. 15th, 1896.

Mr. Holterman.—I have been out at Mr. Post's place different times. I was there the time he mentioned when the man brought down these bees, he had so many in one locality, and he thought he would get just as much honey as he could had not the other man brought the bees down. I think he has some doubts about it in other localities. There is a great deal of buckwheat available there in that respect. it was an exceptional case.

Mr. F. Gemmell.—I think we all over-stock in the west.

A Member.—I have been under the impression in my locality that since there were more bees on the ground I have been getting as much honey as I would have, if they were fewer in number. As far as buckwheat is concerned I do not think it makes any difference.

The Chairman.—You think on while honey you could over-stock?

A Member.—I think I would get more honey if there were no more bees on the ground.

Mr. Brown.—I am living in a locality where there is a large quantity of honey grown annually, and I find the flow of buckwheat honey varies both in quality and quantity, for instance, three years ago the flow of buckwheat honey was very light, hardly any surplus whatever, and what little there was, was of a dark, reddish color. In '95 the last season the flow was good. I consider it would be very easy to over-stock the locality where the flow is light but where the flow is good it is pretty hard to over stock it where in another year four hives would over-stock it.

Mr. Holmes.—I would regard the instance referred to in the paper as being something out of the ordinary altogether. as I certainly consider from 150 to 200