

Notes and Comments

(By J. L. Byer)

S. D. Chapman of Michigan is certainly a "lightning operator" when it comes to hunting queens out of full colonies, near the close of the honey flow. He says that with an assistant it only takes five or six hours to find the queens in one hundred colonies, many of these colonies having a brood nest of sixteen to twenty-four frames (see page 107, C.B.J.). Reckoning on the five-hour basis, that would mean twenty colonies per hour, or three per minute, and in that time operators would have to lift off heavy supers, replace same and do other incidental jobs, in addition to looking for the queens. While the writer in a game of that nature would be handicapped by large hives and frames and dark queens, yet with smaller hives with Italian queens, at the season of the year that Mr. Chapman mentions, I have an idea that I would be away behind his record. Now, I have great respect for Mr. Chapman, and am not for a moment insinuating that I doubt his word, and as his record in queen-hunting is so phenomenal, I feel sure he will pardon us for thus commenting. I suspect difference in race of bees, locality, etc., makes the difference, but his system of requeening will not work here in York County. Such a wholesale slaughter of queens would mean a lot of swarming, and, again, it is impossible to calculate just when our clover flow will cease, so it would be a lottery as to choosing the proper time to kill the old queens. For instance, I have seen the prospects excellent for ten days' flow from the alsike, when a hot wind would in a day stop all the nectar for the season. At other times, when we have thought the flow just over, showers, accompanied with necessary atmospheric conditions, would cause the clover to revive and yield splendidly for some time. Returning to the

matter of hunting the queens out of full colonies, when supers heavy with honey are on the hives, with conditions in my yards, as previously outlined, I really wouldn't want to wager that I could find the queens out of thirty colonies in a day, to say nothing of one hundred.

We have had very little experience in the matter of cellar wintering, but having read a great deal of other bee-keepers' views and experience on this question, naturally we are much interested in the subject. While there are a great many contradictions, seemingly, in matters apicultural, the difference in opinions of cellar winterers are exceptionally pronounced. That a cellar in which bees are wintering should stand at about 45 degrees Fah. is quite orthodox teaching, yet there are some who want a lower temperature than that, while others, notably the late Mr. Barber, of New York State, aimed to keep the temperature at 50 degrees or over. Among those who favor a temperature lower than 45 degrees is Mr. J. F. Davison, Unionville, Ont., one of our most successful bee-keepers. He usually winters about one hundred and sixty colonies, half the number outdoors, and the balance in the cellar, and nearly always both lots of bees are in perfect condition in the spring. His idea as to cellar wintering is to keep the temperature as near the freezing point as possible. Some three miles from home I have twenty-five colonies in a farmer's cellar, and during one of the very severe cold snaps in February he told me that by leaving a window open too long the thermometer got down in the thirties for a few hours. As soon as I heard this Mr. Davison was called up on the 'phone and asked whether so low a temperature would do any harm. As I rather expected, the reply was something like this: "No, not a bit of harm; wish I could keep my cellar that cool all the time."

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