

FOR THE CANADIAN BEE JOURNAL.

Feed, Feeding and Feeder.

I WOULD prefer always leaving my bees plenty of honey of their own gathering for their winter supply. To those unacquainted with bee-keeping, this may seem an easy matter, provided the yield has been sufficient; not so, however, as many bee-keepers can testify. Although I use a hive holding from sixteen to eighteen frames, yet, only one-half of these are used for brood rearing and to contain their winter supply. Unfortunately in this locality the honey season closes before the queen ceases laying in the fall; the consequence is that when the cells are empty of brood, there is no honey to take its place—the only alternative, therefore, is to feed or exchange frames that have little or no honey in them for those that have. The latter plan is out of the question. It would be very unwise to disturb the brood nest in this way. I might say that by arranging the frames for the brood nest and winter supply, if you have the two outside frames with deep cells, so deep that the queen cannot reach to the bottom of them or at least the greater part, there need not be much feeding required, many of my colonies on nine frames having from twenty-five to thirty-five pounds of honey. Occasionally, however, there are some that have much less, so that in order for them to have thirty pounds each I may have to feed ten pounds to many. I regret to say there are some who leave their bees as little honey as possible in order to make a profit by feeding sugar syrup. One editor (I hope there are no more) actually advises this. He says: "Let us so manage our bees that the close of the season finds them destitute, because we have taken away the ten cent honey, and it can be replaced with three cent syrup!" I am of the opinion that such advice as that is opposed to bee-keepers' best interests, and is misleading. I do not believe that sugar syrup can be sealed in the combs for three cents per pound, nor do I believe that the average bee-keeper can get ten cents per pound for his honey, extracted of course. If all the bee-keepers of America were to adopt this plan the markets would be glutted, and the prices would be lowered. I would say, then, do not deprive your bees of honey unnecessarily; but if the frames that have been selected for the brood chamber do not contain sufficient for wintering them, of course feed sugar syrup in preference to honey. It is my belief that leaving our bees destitute of honey in order to feed sugar syrup tends to make them troublesome to our neighbors and to the grocery and confectionery stores. I know that since I have followed the plan of leaving them all they would store in the

brood chamber proper, I have had no complaints whatever from our merchants, as the bees always have ample for immediate use, and frequently sufficient for winter. I would say that I had a very pleasant surprise one year. The clover continued to yield honey in September. The queen began to slacken her laying, beginning, of course, in the outside frames, then just as fast, though slowly, did the bees fill up the cells with honey so that when the time came for weighing the colonies, I could scarcely believe the scales were correct when they registered from thirty to forty pounds of honey in eight and nine frames.

About the middle of September I therefore proceed as follows: I select the first cool day, and proceed to weigh the colonies, deducting the weight of the hive, and one and a half pounds for each frame up to ten frames. This will, I find, fully equal the weight of the frames of comb, what pollen they may contain and the bees. I mark it down in a little book in which I keep a record of all the colonies. I then feed enough to make thirty pounds. Some will tell you this is far too much; well, in former years I have been satisfied with twenty-five pounds, and have lost about three per cent. from starvation—not very many; but if by feeding five pounds extra to each I can prevent this, I think it is better. Some would say: one hundred and sixty colonies five pounds each extra, is eight hundred pounds—more than four or five colonies are worth. But stop: the five pounds extra will be fully repaid by those that may possibly have done without it, as they will do better, build up faster, and your mind will be freer from anxiety regarding them. I would say that the safest plan is to weigh them again in the middle of October, after feeding has been done and brood-rearing ceased. It may be that in September many colonies having young queens had considerable brood which was not allowed for, and perhaps considerable of the feed has been consumed. If your colonies should contain from twenty to twenty-five pounds then I should consider it ample.

TO PREPARE THE FEED.

Tak an ordinary boiler, and put in say, forty pounds of water, and, as soon as it boils, drop in eighty pounds of best granulated sugar, of double the weight of the water, and stir occasionally, and as soon as it boils remove it to cool somewhat, say, to blood heat before feeding. The better plan is to keep plenty made, so that by mixing the hot with the cold you are saved the annoyance of waiting. To convey it to the colonies to be fed, use a large can with a tap to it, place it in a wheelbarrow or small waggon; take with you an imperial quart measure or other