

Introducing Queens.

Discussion at Chicago-North-Western
Bee-Keepers' Association

"How do you introduce queens?"

Mr. Taylor—I seldom introduce a queen except in the spring. If I want to change a queen, or the colony is queenless, I open the hive and observe the conduct of the bees, and you can tell, if they have a peculiar way of acting, running together, perhaps running towards your hand a little, with their wings lifted and a slight shaking motion, you can turn your queen right in. They are all right. Sometimes, if I am in doubt, I will put a queen-excluder on the top, let a few bees come up, let the queen loose and decide then. I hardly ever cage a queen in the spring because the bees are so anxious to get to work that they will almost invariably accept the queen; in fact, I do not know that I remember when a colony that was queenless refused to take a queen early in the spring.

Mr. Abbott—Suppose you had a black queen and you wanted to give them an Italian.

Mr. Taylor—Take her out and wait a day or two to let them find out they had lost a queen. They are terribly anxious to get a queen in the spring, and that running together a little and a slight shaking of the wings shows that they are looking for one.

Mr. Abbott—I supposed that among all the progressive bee-keepers the one most in advance and at the forefront was R. L. Taylor of Michigna.

Mr. Taylor—No; I am a foggy sir.

Mr. Abbott—But I see he says that the hive should be left for a day or two for the bees to find out that they

are queenless. Now in the name of common-sense, I want to ask why? I asked that question, and I asked it that I might bring out just that one idea. What makes a colony know that it is queenless? There is something to this. You are wasting a great deal of time when you wait two days for the colony to find out they are queenless. Now if Mr. Taylor will tell why, perhaps I will say something more.

Mr. Taylor—Two days early in the spring do not count very much, and you do not have to wait to see whether they are ready to receive her or not. It is the easiest way. Of course, I remember at one time that I was handling some bees, when I used to fool with them, and had a lot of them shaken on the ground, and in stumbling around with my big feet I must have hurt the queen. I noticed before I got through the colony that the bees were in a turmoil. They were running up on the front of the hive, and on the side, and looking around as lively as possible. I concluded something had happened to the queen. I looked on the ground and found that I had stepped on her. I got another queen and they were perfectly satisfied with the other queen.

Mr. Abbott—I have been trying for 20 years to get into current bee literature and bee books this one statement, that it is not necessary for any colony to be made queenless in order to introduce a queen safely a day, or an hour, or a minute, except what time is necessary between pinching the queen's head