

NOTES AND COMMENTS

(By J. L. Byer)

This winter, alternately with our own clover honey we have been using on our table a beautiful sample of basswood honey obtained from a friend near lake Erie. In explanation I might say that it is now eight years since we have had any basswood honey in our locality, and when I had the privilege of tasting the honey referred to, a longing for some of the old style article presented itself, with the result that two sixty pound cans were at once ordered. The honey is of very heavy body, the kind that will simply **rope** when lifted on a spoon, and I suppose largely because of having had none of this honey from the basswood for so long, we think it about the best honey from that source that we have ever had on the table. Nothing uncommon about having basswood honey, no doubt some will be saying, and if it were not for a very peculiar feature that we have found with this particular sample, it is not likely that we would have thought about mentioning the matter.

The honey in question remained perfectly clear till about January 1st, and then when it did granulate, it got to be about the hardest bit of honey that we have ever handled. In fact it is so hard that a heavy knife will take but chips out of the pail that are as white and smooth in the grain as the best cream candy. The peculiar feature that we have referred to comes in evidence when we go to liquify the honey, for instead of getting clear as was the case before it granulated, it persists in having a creamy color so dense that it does not look like honey at all when put in glass.

Perhaps if it were heated long enough this trouble would be done away with, but so far I have but left it twenty-four hours in warm water after it seemed to be all dissolved, and after that length of time the dull, cloudy appearance remains

as stated. The thought came to me, that if honey with this peculiarity happened to come into the hands of some one who was bottling for the trade, quite a bit of trouble might be caused by it, as it certainly would not do to put it up in glass when it looks as I have described. Personally we can advance no reason for the peculiarity, unless as has just occurred to me as I am writing, the fact of us removing it out of the tins in small pieces before melting may cause a lot of air bubbles, which on account of the extreme density of the honey may be a long time in clearing. This is only a theory, and to prove if it has anything to do with the matter, I will melt the next pail used in the same package it is now in. I might say that when the honey was received it was all run into five pound pails so as to be handier for using, and to avoid spoiling the lithographing on these, pails we have been removing the honey into another vessel for liquifying purposes.

[A very nice point Mr. Byer. Your theory is, doubtless, correct. Let us know the result when you have liquified it, without admitting the air.—Ed.]

For quite a few years now, I have been trying to practice with success two items in wintering that are indorsed by a number of apiarists here in Ontario and in other places. These two things are: wintering with sealed covers over the bees, and contracting the entrances of the hives to a space of say four or five inches wide by half an inch deep. Whenever these methods have been tried, results have never been satisfactory for the first named item, and as for the last named, disaster generally followed any colonies that I left with the small entrance till spring. I am aware that a number of good bee-keepers advocate the small entrance, but that does not constitute it a crime to record an honest expression of failure in the hands of another. The smaller entrance, notwithstanding my