

FIRST STEPS IN BEE-KEEPING.

"Keeping Everlastingly at it Brings Success."

Questions Sent in Bearing Upon
First Steps in Bee-Keeping Will be
Dealt With in This Department By
the Editor.

THE SURPLUS HONEY.



STORES sufficient for not only winter, but to carry the bees comfortably through the following spring, is an absolute necessity in order to secure the best results in the apiary. Many, unfortunately, judging from their actions, consider that it is of no importance whether the bees have am-

ple stores for winter or not, and still less consider the importance of giving bees abundant stores through the spring.

If bees have ample stores for winter they are likely to come through winter better than if they have barely enough, and particularly is this true if they are wintered outside, as when wintered outside the bees are not always able to break cluster in cold weather and move from one side of the hive to the other.

In order to be able to build up quickly in the spring, bees must have sufficient stores; not only for immediate demands, but they must feel at all times that there is no necessity for having a care for the future as to stores. Bees are more provident than man, and when they begin to feel that supplies may run short in the future they stop rearing brood either entirely or in part. It is important in the spring of the year that the bees should build up quickly, in fact no one need hesitate to say bees cannot build up too quickly in the spring under natural conditions.

If then, it is important to have abundant stores in the spring of the year, is it necessary to figure so closely just how many pounds it will take to carry a colony through the winter? Is it not better to be liberal and not run the chance of having a colony starve just before it is ready to come out of winter quarters, when perhaps 20 pounds of honey have been entirely lost.

To run the chance of being short is to pursue a penny wise and pound foolish policy. Such a course should be abandoned.

In the last number of *The Canadian Bee Journal* instructions were given as to the taking of extra combs of honey for winter stores.

As soon as the brood is fairly well hatched in the lower chamber, which in this locality is during the middle of September, every hive should have at least 25 pounds of honey. A Langstroth hive without lid but with comb and bees, also body of hives should weigh to have sufficient stores 55 to 60 pounds. If the colony has not sufficient stores, combs free from brood and with the least honey should be removed and the balance of the combs closed up. Then put enough combs of sealed stores in one side of the hive to make all the required weight. As far as stores are concerned, your bees are now ready for winter and all has been done quickly, and, I venture to say, at less loss and expense than feeding. This method is the best and the only one that the beginner or any other should seek to pursue.

FEEDING.

If the above advice has been given too late, or if the honey has fallen off too quickly, or if the bees have consumed an unusual quantity of stores, feeding must be resorted to. A great many practice feeding every colony the number of pounds required. It appears to me this is not the best method. After a careful trial of the various methods, I find with the best feeders, feeding as rapidly as possible, the bees will not store nearly as much as is given them. By that is meant, if the bees are given 30 pounds of syrup they will not gain 30 pounds in weight. They consume a certain amount in the excitement which all bees undergo when getting stores, and if 30 pounds of syrup is fed, consisting of two-thirds of granulated sugar and one-third of water, the bees are not likely six days after feeding to have gained more than 20 pounds.

Again, the weaker colonies often require the stores, and in feeding at a time when no natural stores are gathered, the bees are likely to try and rob these, and there is trouble at once.

To have the least loss through exciting the bees, the less number of colonies fed the better, and therefore I give surplus combs to strong colonies and feed them a sufficient quantity to answer for several other colonies. In short, by this method are secured artificially the surplus combs.

This method is one which will commend itself to many.