

HOW TO REQUEEN ANNUALLY AT A BIG PROFIT

By S. D. CHAPMAN in *The Bee-Keepers' Review*

It is very amusing to see some of our largest honey producers grasping at the idea of having two or more queens in each colony to build them up in the spring. Of course, we have our troubles, and one is that we cannot bring our colonies through the winter strong enough in bees to take care of anywhere near the amount of brood for which one of our queens can furnish the eggs. This is not a matter of locality, but the result of careful methods in producing good queens.

It is my purpose in this article not only to tell why that I requeen my colonies annually, but how I have brought my bees to the standard where, with the same conditions, three of my colonies are worth four colonies headed by any queens that I have been able to buy.

To start with, if I had 50 or 100 colonies of bees, and they were an inferior stock of bees, the first thing I would do to improve them would be to send to two or three queen breeders that were breeding the best strains of dark, leather-colored Italians, and purchase a queen to head each colony. After I had had these queens a year, or long enough to thoroughly test them, what do I find? Many of the colonies are poor, some are good, and a few are extra good.

If this transaction happened in anything except queens, we would say we had got a lot of culls. These queen-breeders are strictly honest men. I ordered untested queens; they sent me young queens, and they did not know but they are all good. In fact, they cannot tell what the queens will prove to be; it is not until the queens come into the hands of the honey-

producer that they show up in their true light.

Let me ask, why this vast difference? This is the point I am going after pretty soon, but first let me say that, after purchasing these queens, I need not look for any more help from the queen breeder. In fact, if I keep right on purchasing queens promiscuously, I will soon find myself going down hill rapidly, with no brakes on.

If the honey-producer ever comes into possession of a good strain of bees, it will be through his own individual efforts. In testing and choosing his bees he has many advantages which the queen breeders do not employ. Such good qualities and characteristics as hardiness, industry, gentleness and comb building, crop out only in certain individual colonies, and these are the colonies that we must save for the foundation of improvement.

We purchase a select, tested, breeding queen, as good as money can buy. From this tested queen we rear 50 or more queens. The conditions present while raising these queens are the same. They are all alike, and their chances to make good queens are equal, up to the time they are fertilized. I believe we are on sound footing up to this point.

How We Requeen.

We will take 100 colonies as a basis. About one week before the close of the raspberry flow one of my helpers and myself will go to this yard, and take away all the queens except about five. These are my breeding queens, and are used the following year to rear drones for next season's use; and, by the way, the following spring, the first time I look over my colonies, I put into these five colonies enough drone comb to make one frame of drone comb to each colony, and I expect to

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