

Meeting of the Senate of Canadian Bee-Keepers.

What Protection do you Give Bees, When Taken out of the Cellar in March?

Introduced by Mr. Shaver.

Mr. Fleming. If I had bees in the cellar I would not take them out in March.

Mr. Taylor. Put on super and fill it with leaves four or five inches deep; see that the bees are well protected on top. Look after the entrance. If it was a nice day I would let them fly.

Mr. Armstrong. A man in our section—all the protection he gives his bees when he takes them out of the cellar is that he puts a cushion right down on the frames; he is very successful.

Mr. Roach. I never cellar. I would want to put them right in clamps, and pack them in for the winter.

Mr. Young. I read the best American Bee Journals, and from what I can read, and learn from experience, I believe cellar wintering is the right and proper method. I do not give them any protection after I take them out. I take them out from the 12th to the 15th of March; I do not say not to take them out till the 15th of April, but the earlier the better. In the fall of the year I gather about a dozen barrels of maple leaves, and fill the supers as full as I can, and contract the entrance to half an inch. It does not make a particle of difference to me where I put them. I take them right out. I start about 10.30 or 11.00, and when I get through you would think they were swarming. I used to try a few to-day and a few to-morrow. Those you let fly to day, to-morrow are ready to jump on the other ones. On several occasions I used jute, good thick heavy sacks, on top of a quilt—a good roof. I watch for a nice day, from the 10th or 12th to the 18th. Last year I took them out on the 18th. All the American Bee Journals that I have read say, keep your cellar from 40 to 50 degrees.

Mr. Holtermann. When you are studying this question you have to come down to conditions again. You might as well say, here is one man or woman or child,

and in the spring, how are you going to dress that child. One has been sick, and is weak and feeble; on that one you would put a good overcoat, while the other could run about without one. (Hear, hear.) I believe that if the bees are wintered well, and come out with good vitality, that if you leave on the sealed quilt (see that it has not broken loose) and then put on super with either leaves in or a cushion, and contract the entrance, that is enough. If you can get a fence about them, say as a shelter from high winds, so much the better. If they are wintered well I do not believe they need any more. If the colony is not strong in the fall, in the spring we put a cushion with leaves or planer shavings between the wall of the hive and that division board, and put that on the coldest side of the hive.

Mr. Robinson. I opened half a dozen hives on the sixth of March. Last year it was exceptionally fine, I did not give them any protection. I have seen the thermometer come down to eighteen or twenty below zero after the middle of March. It may not do then.

Mr. Phelps. I think it matters very little how cold the weather is, so long as it is not prolonged. A cold snap for a day will not disturb a colony of bees at all, but if it is continued cold weather, that finishes them; in that case they want protection; any way to keep them warm. Let anyone advise any scheme they like. The plan suggested here is as good as any.

Mr. Armstrong. Do you think they ought to be protected?

Mr. Phelps. I do, decidedly, if it is cold; if experience is worth anything.

Mr. Young. How far should the fence be from the bees?

Mr. Shaver. For six days I had to dig the snow away from them. I had boards at every hive, standing up. The snow would drift around, and I would have to shovel them out. I kept some with double boards. I was afraid to have these boards sticking up in front of the hives, and the snow so that you could not see the hives. I could not stand it.