

## INDEX DISINFECTING HIVES.

**Mr. Hopkins and D. M. Macdonald Defend Their Position.**

To the Editor of Canadian Bee Journal:

Sir,—Referring to a letter on the above subject from a "New Zealand Reader" in your October issue, in which your correspondent mentions my name pretty freely, and criticizes my remarks on disinfecting, I will preface my reply by observing that it is very unusual to find a criticism in any of the bee journals from a person hiding behind a nom de plume, though in this instance the identity of the writer is very thinly disguised. As a rule I take no notice of anonymous correspondence, but in this case most of the statements are so glaringly inaccurate and misleading that I feel it my duty to correct them.

In order to show how little reliance is to be placed on any of his remarks, I will refer to what he says concerning my knowledge of Foul Brood, which, to say the least, is utterly ridiculous, viz., "Not having had much to do with foul brood himself (myself) he draws upon other authorities," etc. His extreme self assurance, characteristic of youth and inexperience, has here drawn him into an egregious blunder, as the following will show.

I had my first real battle with the disease in my own commercial queen rearing apiary in 1888-9, when I at once ceased supplying queens. This apiary consisted of 40 apiaries of a splendid Italian strain, the result of seven years select breeding, all of which I lost through disease. We knew nothing better than the "drug treatment," which my critic, knowing nothing about it, mixes up with disinfecting of hives. I did not resume my queen trade until about four years after when I arranged for all my queens to be raised on an island 50 miles from Auckland, where there was no disease.

After visiting all the apiaries in the district I was then living in, my honest be-

lief is that there was not a colony in any of them free from disease, and I believe all of them died out. This I think was a pretty extensive experience for a beginning, and this was about the time your correspondent was born. Then again, I was, during the next few years, several times through all the largest Waikato apiaries when that district was rotten with disease, and I had more or less dealing with all of them. Since then I have never been out of touch with disease until I retired from my government position some months ago. So much for the reliability of your correspondent, and now regarding disinfecting.

When a person assumes, as my critic has done, to know all there is to be known regarding this debatable question upon which so many differ, and the settlement of which appeared to be as far off as ever, it shows, I contend, a lack of that logical sequence of reasoning so necessary to the formation of sound judgment.

With regard to my own knowledge of the matter, I confess at once that I really do not know whether disinfecting of hives does good or not, and the question at present being unsettled, I have to rely upon my own judgment as to which course to follow. Reasoning by analogy, I take what I believe to be the safest, and follow the general rule adopted in all germ diseases by medical men, and disinfect. It is impossible to settle such a question satisfactorily by a rough and ready method, there are too many contingencies to reckon with; it can only be done by careful bacterial research. As for disinfecting being objected to on account of the extra trouble, this is really nonsense, for the person who is really anxious to rid his apiary of disease is only too ready and willing to do anything reasonable. Contrary to your correspondent's assertion that disinfection is not carried out in New Zealand, I know from the number of letters received, and from

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