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ANNUAL MEETING ONTARIO BEE-KEEPERS' ASSOCIATION

Past Winter Losses and the Lessons to
be Drawn Therefrom.

(By R. F. Holtermann.)

In the Canadian Bee Journal for September appears a letter from the veteran statistician in the Department of Agriculture for the Dominion, Mr. Geo. Johnston, which reads in part as follows:

"We certainly had a severe loss in our bees here. I lost all I had in Nova Scotia. East of the Ottawa I think more than 75 per cent of the colonies were lost. That would mean 53,000 or 54,000 colonies dead, leaving not more than 17,000 that came through the winter, while 50 per cent loss west of the Ottawa would leave the stock of bees not more than 60,000, giving in all 77,000, where the census of 1901 gave a total of 190,000. This is a terrible death-rate, and at \$2 a colony the loss through winter's action would not be far from a quarter of a million dollars for bees alone, to say nothing of the loss of honey through not having the bees. If the whole 77,000 give off 10 swarms this season, we would still be 69,000 to 70,000 colonies short of what we were in 1900."

The above statement, coming from a source, has upon it the stamp

of authority. I had previously placed the percentage of loss at 70, which, in my estimation, is not too high.

In estimating the financial loss, we must remember that a great many of the combs and hives in which the bees perished have become useless, the combs having been destroyed by that enemy (and friend) of the bee-keeper—the moth. The hives sometimes find a market at a loss, but quite often the moth renders them partially valueless, carelessness and time completing the work of destruction. Three or four dollars per colony would be a very conservative estimate of the loss in bees and hives. Again, the majority of the colonies that survived were in too weak a condition to take proper advantage of the honey flow when it came, resulting in the loss through lack of workers of a large percentage of nectar which might have been harvested.

Looking at it from a national standpoint, there would be a financial loss to the country of at least half a million dollars, and a blow to the industry from which it will take years to recover. So much for the fact. Next in my address I am called upon to make deductions.

Webster's Dictionary gives as the meaning of "deduction" "that which is deducted or drawn from premises by a process of reasoning; an inference; a conclusion." Let me confess that this is a line of work I like, however feeble my powers may be to per-