

Notes by the Way

By G. A. DEADMAN.

GIVING BEES WINTERING IN CELLAR A CLENSING FLIGHT

I am discussing this subject a month or so early, in order that those interested may have time to consider it before it is time to put it into practice should they desire to do so. It seems to me that cellar wintering is coming more in vogue every year. It is not the purpose of this article to say which I have found best or the success I have had with either, but rather to emphasize my belief that it pays to give the bees in the cellar a fly in early spring, and then return them to the cellar for two weeks or so before removing them finally. It is such a large subject to deal with and so many things to consider that I hardly know where to begin. In the first place I had better describe this "locality," so that if you wish to do as I advise, you will know whether conditions are the same. Mr. R. F. Holtermann, of Brantford, but last year made the statement, that in his locality he would begin setting out the bees at any time after March 15th. He says, "out of 100, set out 7 or 8 and when they have had a good flight put shade board over the entrance and set out more the next favorable day and so on until all are out." I am inclined to think that friend Holtermann has made some mistake in the date, or else things are vastly different here, April 15th is about the time for setting them out in this locality and sometimes a few days earlier and sometimes even later. From the 10th to the 20th of April we may have two or three favorable days

for this, but more frequently only one. Those outside sometimes have a fly in March, but only for a short time if they should. In stating my reasons for giving bees a fly two weeks or so before being finally removed from the cellar, it will be necessary to explain that in this locality, as in many others I presume, we frequently have days when it is warm enough for the bees to fly but too cold for them to go very far, which many do and are lost. This is one reason why I like bees returned to the cellar after a cleansing flight. They do not get lost or chilled to death. Another reason is they are not becoming exhausted by continuous flights, as they do when the weather is warm day after day, after being removed from the cellar. The most disastrous spring I ever experienced was one where for a whole week we had summer weather following the day they were removed from the cellar. The outcome was, before young bees were hatched so many of the old bees had died that there were not sufficient left to protect the brood. Most frequently my experience has been that no brood will be reared until removed from the cellar, which makes me anxious to have them out as soon as possible. I know there are exceptions to this, but too few with me to induce me to leave them in their winter repository longer than I can help, unless they have had a cleansing flight. Before going further I would say that while Doolittle may object to rearing bees out of season, I have never yet had my bees too strong for the white clover, which usually begins to bloom here between the 10th and 15th of June. Colonies that may be ready to swarm in May can be well used in strengthening others that may otherwise take until July, so that while I am very careful to shut off brood rearing that may be