

BEE-KEEPING IN MANITOBA

Indexed

Wm. C. McKinnell.

My experience in keeping bees is of a rather limited character. I started three years ago as I wanted to have some hobby. Bees seemed to appeal to me as being the most instructive as well as the most profitable, and I might state that I have found them both. I knew nothing about them at first, but I did know that we had any amount of pasture around here, a scrubby country about 40 miles north of Winnipeg. White clover grows everywhere by the roadside and on any waste ground. From the first of July to frost we have quantities of fire weed or willow herb, besides dandelions and about 25 different kinds of wild asters, together with lots of other honey and pollen bearing plants too numerous to mention. A few farmers around here are beginning to grow alfalfa, although I have not been able to find out whether it is patronized much by the bees. Clover is not grown here at all as a crop. So you see my bees have practically to live and collect honey all from wild flowers. I expect if an experienced apiarist had followed me around since I have kept bees he would have been highly amused at some of my ways of handling them; but I started without knowledge or experience, and anything I did was from observation and with the assistance of hints received from your journal, and I can assure you they have helped me considerably. I put 8 colonies away in my cellar last winter on Nov. 9th and never touched them the entire winter. I had a hard time keeping them cool enough, as I have a furnace, and although I had them boarded off and a fresh air inlet, it was a hard job sometimes to keep the temperature just right. But I generally managed to have it somewhere about 45 degrees. I took them out on the 15th of April and found they had all wintered well, with the exception of one that had lost its queen. The others were all fairly well filled with eggs and brood. I man-

aged to save the queenless colony by supplying it with two frames of brood taken from another hive. Queen-cells were started at once. I got my first swarm on May 30th and have now 19 good strong colonies. This year has not been with us, a very good one. April was fine, as was the first part of May, but June and July were wet, cold and windy. August has been a fine month. Our honey-flow comes a lot later here than in the east and south. I have extracted about 700 lbs. already and expect to get about as much more. Of course there will be a lot of hives that will not give me any this year, and it seems very little when you read of the yields elsewhere, but I am well satisfied however, and hope to increase the yield per hive every year. The biggest trouble that I have had is that I am very busy in the summer time, and I am afraid I have not given them the attention that I ought. I should just like to mention that I was very much interested in the discussions that went through your journal re the different breeds and characteristics of them. Now, most of mine are Italians, of which there is no doubt. I can do anything with them with bare face and hands. I have also two or three hives of a kind slightly larger. They are well-banded and just as good as the Italians or even better, but instead of the yellow streak it is grey. As my Galician friends who keep bees up here say, they are "sharp." I would like to see the man or woman who could handle them uncovered. I have tried them all ways, and the only way I have found yet is to give them smoke, and lots of it too. The worst thing about them is that they will go for you when you are a distance away and not disturbing them. I should like very much to know what variety they are. They are good workers but will not go out in weather that the Italians will. They make a much whiter wax.

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[We are extremely glad to hear from our correspondent. Such contributions