

- May 24. Vetch. Bees work on stems.
 " 28.—White clover and hawthorn.
 June 7.—Snowberry, chokeberry, mustard, stonecrop.
 " 22. Bees rushing on snowberry. Goldenrod, buckwheat, fireweed, sage, sweet clover, and alfalfa are reported from various parts of the Province, but dates of blooming are not given.

CHAPTER II.

Starting Bee-keeping.

To learn the art of bee-keeping, one must keep bees. It is not enough to buy a colony and trust to luck for the outcome; the owner must learn to *keep* bees, that is to say, have them at the end of some definite period, say twelve months or five years, or longer. The beginner in bee-keeping must realise that bees are just a variety of stock, like cattle, hogs, or chickens, and, like them, must be taken care of; therefore, he must learn about bee needs and bee habits, so that in times of necessity he can give the little aid that is required to tide them over the period of trouble. Too many beginners assume that bees need no care, that they will work for nothing and board themselves, yielding profit in the form of honey, and multiplying their kind several times in the course of a single season, so that by the investment of a few dollars in one hive there will in a very few years result a good-sized apiary that has easily paid its way out of surplus honey.

The actual facts do not correspond with so rosy a picture. Without doubt, bees will pay better returns for the capital, time, and labour invested than any form of farm enterprise; but the big returns are got, one year with another, as the result of knowledge and skill judiciously applied. It is undoubtedly true that in most years bees reproduce themselves prolifically by means of swarms; but this is Nature's way of compensating for a high death-rate in normal conditions, so that there will generally be in an average of years just about the same number of colonies in a certain locality. Any permanent increase must be brought about by the skill of the bee-keeper.

Again, the production of surplus honey is not the reason for the existence of the colony; this result is due to the manipulations of the apiarist. In a state of nature, what would be surplus honey is transformed into more bees, until the hive is overflowing when it divides, often several times, into duplicates of itself. Bees, we thus see, make honey, and then out of the honey make more bees. So the colony that sends off swarms is not always a honey-producer that season; hence the bee-keeper who is working for surplus honey is generally endeavouring to find a sure method for the prevention of swarming.

The purpose of this book is to set the beginner in bee-keeping in British Columbia on the right track, but he is advised to see, if possible, an experienced apiarist open and examine a hive, if for no other reason than to gain confidence in himself, so that he may do slowly and methodically what he is tempted to rush rather hastily.

HOW TO START BEE-KEEPING.

In most regions the best time to begin bee-keeping is in the end of April or the beginning of May. Not only is it near the commencement of the honey-flow, which in this Province is mostly from white clover in June, but the risk of loss through the death of the colony is at the minimum. Of course, the novice is ignorant of what constitutes a good colony; but if he buys a hive in which the bees are clustering in six