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The Cause and Control of Swarming in Bees

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THE CAUSE AND CONTROL OF SWARMING IN BEES

BEING THE REPORT OF A CONFERENCE HELD AT ROTHAMSTED ON APRIL 27th, 1935, UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF

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ROTHAMSTED EXPERIMENTAL STATION
HARPENDEN

The Demaree System (Contributed)

W. H. J. Prior

W. H. J. Prior (1935) *The Demaree System (Contributed) ;* The Cause And Control Of Swarming In Bees, pp 22 - 23 **- DOI: https://doi.org/10.23637/ERADOC-1-212**

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THE DEMAREE PLAN

As notes of Mr. Prior's lecture are not available, a short account of the Demaree plan is inserted below.

The term "Demaree method" is a general one and there are several variations of it. Originally it was a treatment for swarms which had issued in the ordinary way, but it has been taken to mean "any method for expanding the broodnest by transferring the brood or the queen from one broodnest to another—and then confining her activities to one particular broodchamber (usually the bottom one) by the use of a queen excluder, for the purpose of the prevention or control of swarming." (Root.)

It will be seen that the above comprehensive definition covers more than many people would describe as demareeing and would include the Peck and Snelgrove methods among others.

The following is a quotation from an article by G. W. Demaree (*American Bee Journal*, LXVII, p. 303, 1892):

"I begin with the strongest colonies and transfer the combs containing brood from the broodchamber to an upper story above the queen excluder. One comb containing some unsealed brood and eggs is left in the brood chamber with empty combs.

"The colony thus has all of its brood and the queen, but the queen has a new brood nest below the excluder, while the combs of brood are in the super. In twenty-one days all the brood will be hatched out of the combs above the excluder, so a continuous succession of young bees is sustained. Usually the combs above the excluder will be filled with honey by the time all the bees are hatched, and no system is as sure of giving one set of combs full of honey for the extractor in the very poorest seasons: and if the season is propitious the yield will be enormous under proper management."

Demaree himself modified the plan in 1894 and again in 1895. An extra entrance was provided in the upper brood chamber so that the drones hatched above the queen excluder could escape. Later he put the sealed brood above, leaving the unsealed below with the queen. The most favoured plan at the present time is to have the supers between the two brood chambers above the queen excluder, rather than on top of the upper brood chamber. This gives the bees in the upper brood chamber a feeling of queenlessness and queen cells are started, which may later either be destroyed or used for increase. A criticism which has been made against the Demaree system is that the honey, which is stored in the combs of the upper chamber, after the emergence of the brood, is alleged to be inferior to that from supers in which brood has never been raised. Mr. Prior contended that there was no evidence for this belief, and that he had gained prizes for such honey at shows at which those who condemned the practice were acting as judges.

https://doi.org/10.23637/ERADOC-1-212

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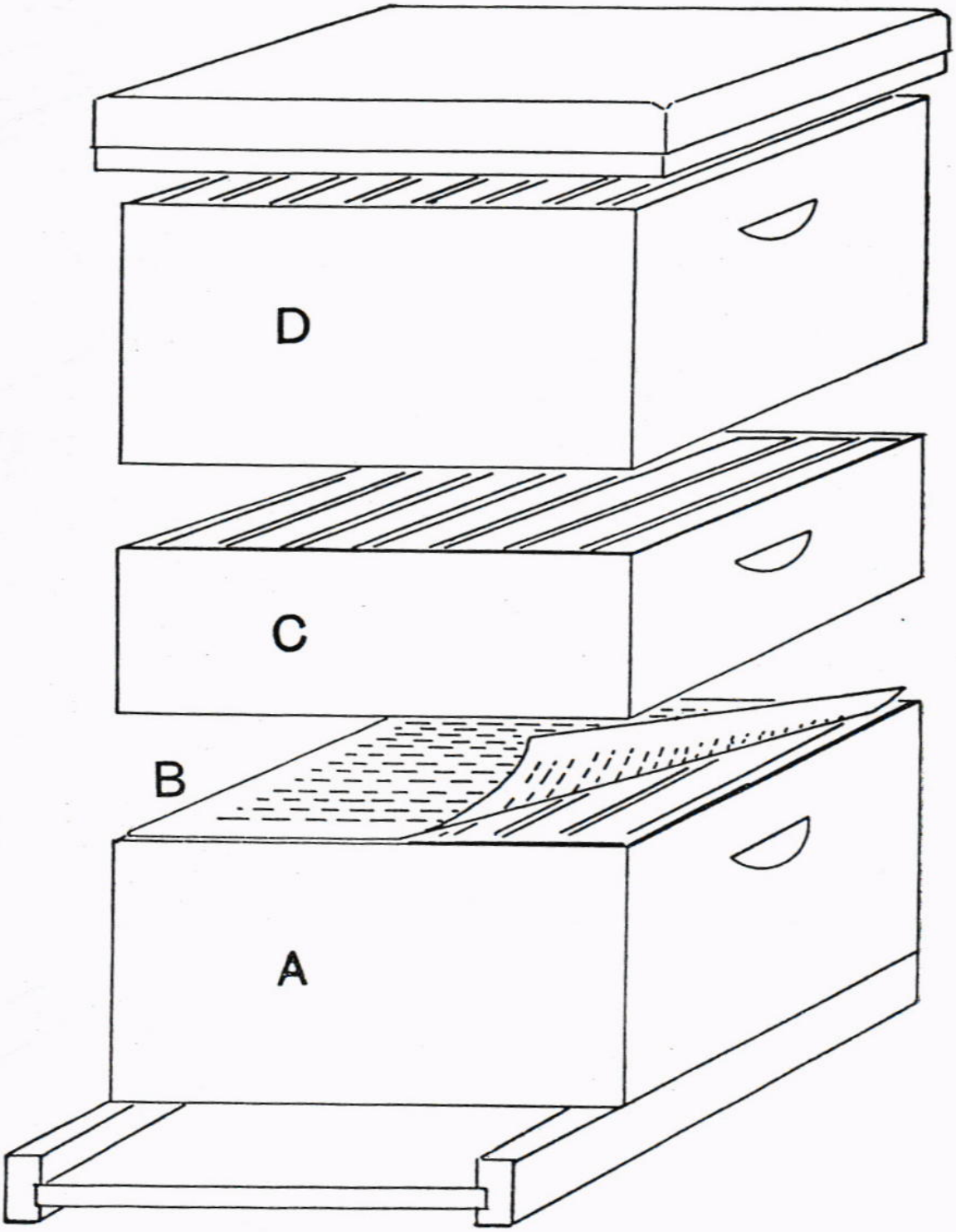

PLATE II. DEMAREE PLAN.

A. Laying chamber containing the queen.
B. Queen excluder.
C. Super or supers, which are added as the honeyflow progresses.
D. Chamber containing brood which has been put up. In this chamber queen cells are liable to be started.