



E. A. Saye

The New Zealand Beekeepers' Journal.

MARCH 18th, 1917.

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FOR
THE NATIONAL BEE-KEEPERS'
ASSOCIATION OF N.Z.



PER ANNUM: **3/6** IN ADVANCE.





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The New Zealand Beekeepers' Journal

The Official Organ of the
National Beekeepers' Association of N.Z.

No. 33

DUNEDIN.

3/6 PER ANNUM.

QUEEN EXCLUDERS.

The question of the use of queen excluders has given rise to a great deal of discussion lately in the Journal and elsewhere. On another page we reprint a portion of Mr. Earp's notes in the December issue of the Journal of Agriculture dealing with the proper use of queen excluders. Mr. Earp has given a clear and accurate description of the only method by which the use of excluders will give success. This article caused Mr. Hopkins to pen a tirade in the N.Z. Farmer against the use of queen excluders. When experts disagree, the average beekeeper is apt to wonder who is right. Mr. Earp, being a Government official, is unable to reply, but Mr. Hopkins, by referring to certain incidents that occurred at Waerenga State Apiary, has drawn Mr. Robert Gibb into the discussion. Mr. Gibb's contribution will be found in this issue.

An Innovation.

We learn that the Department of Agriculture is finding one of the apiary instructors with a five-seater motor car. It is rather surprising to find a Government Department guilty of such extravagance at a time when the nation is asked to study economy. If a car is considered a necessity, we should think a two-seater would be large enough. It will be interesting to see whether the extra expense and the extra seats will enable the instructor to get in a larger number of visits.

State Apiary.

Beekeepers have been persistent at the Annual Conferences in advocating a better system of management at the State Apiary, and it is satisfactory to note that at last a change has been made. Hitherto the Apiary had been under the management of the Experimental Farms Division, which merely asked but seldom took advice from the Apiaries Division. Beekeepers naturally looked upon the latter Division as being responsible for the management, and it had to bear all the criticism. The Ruakura Apiary is now under the direct control of the Apiaries Division, and a live beekeeper has been appointed manager. Hitherto the Apiary was experimental in name only, but a programme of practical experiments and demonstrations has already been inaugurated, so beekeepers can look forward to an era of usefulness. We hope the authorities will make the results of experiments readily available for publication, and so increase their value to beekeepers in general.

Export.

A word to the beekeepers who are packing honey for export this season. Too much care cannot be exercised in packing the honey. Tins should and must be either lacquered or oiled all over. It is not sufficient to do the tops only.

Some producers solder the lids down. The grader has to remove them, and in doing so the lids are spoilt so much that it is impossible to make them secure again. No soldering is necessary. Two grades in one line must be packed separately and marked so that they can be distinguished.

On making inquiries from the H.P.A. in regard to honey lying in Auckland awaiting shipment, we learn that the delay was due to somebody's carelessness in not sending the advice notes to the H.P.A., consequently the honey was lying at the grading store some time before the manager knew it was there. In order to avoid similar mistakes in the future, arrangements have been made for the shareholders to advise both the manager of the Company and the Company's agents at the grading port when honey is sent forward. The H.P.A.'s agents, the Bristol and Dominions' Association, can arrange for shipping space as soon as the honey is graded, and in any case they pay the advance on it on the 20th of the month following delivery to the grading store, so producers need not worry about not being able to get their money.

Later.—This honey has been shipped.

TRAVEL NOTES.

(By the SECRETARY.)

Travelling along the foothills of the Alps from Springfield to Geraldine, I was passing through good beekeeping country all the way. Within a certain distance of the hills the nor'-westers bring rain, while lower down country they parch the country up. Within the rain area the beekeepers have done well this year, and quantities of the very best honey have been produced. I visited a fair number of beekeepers, and found a great variation in the crops, due largely to the methods of management. Good crops were realised where the bees received undivided attention, but medium to poor where farm work interfered. Some had not even started extracting, while others had finished. The best crops were obtained where the beekeeper kept ahead of the bees with the extracting. I am certain that tons of honey are lost by those who leave the extracting to the end of the flow in a season such as this.

I picked up seven new subscribers inside a week. It would look as if there is considerable room yet to expand the circulation of the Journal.

The neatest, cleanest and most up-to-date honey-house I have seen belongs to a lady beekeeper on the Taieri. This lady does all the work in connection with an apiary of fifty colonies, even to the extracting. She uses a steam-heated uncapping knife, a four-frame power extractor, and a honey pump to deliver the honey to the strainer over the tank. Everything about the apiary and the honey-house is scrupulously clean, and an object-lesson to most of the men beekeepers. There is no doubt but what most beekeepers are too careless in this respect. Honey is an article of food, and should be handled in a scrupulously clean manner. Most people would

never want to eat honey after seeing the way some beekeepers handle it. This lady has such a reputation for thoroughness that she can sell every pound she produces at a higher price than others get, and the customers come for it from far and wide. Consider this, you beekeepers who complain of no demand and poor prices!

Sunday, 11th March, was a fine hot day, and on the Taieri Plains I came across a fine crop of second growth red clover in full bloom. I went over to it to see whether the hive bees were working on it. Sure enough they were there in thousands. I could count an average of four or five to every square yard. Bumble bees were there too. By lying down I could see a continual stream of bees passing to and from a near-by apiary. Watching closely, I could see that both kinds of bees were going between the florets for honey as often as to the tubes of the florets. The hive bees certainly put their tongues down the tubes, and, judging by the steady way in which they worked, I should say they were getting some reward. It would have been interesting to have examined the hives to see whether the new honey was there in noticeable quantities. At the same time bees were working hard on white clover and a field of mustard near by.

IMPORTING QUEENS.

(By, W. B. BRAY.)

Mr. I. Hopkins, in the last N.Z. Farmer, writes against the idea of importing queens from America on the grounds that New Zealand breeders can breed the very best. He quotes the unsolicited testimonials sent in by purchasers of queens from the Waerenga State Apiary. Now, Mr. Robert Stewart is perhaps the most successful queen breeder in this country, and his stock was used for the foundation of the Waerenga strain. But Mr. Stewart always has been an importer of queens, and is still importing, because he recognises that the end of perfection can never be reached—that however good the strain we possess, it is advantageous to go on importing from the best breeders in America (who are themselves continually working towards improvement), and compare their strains with ours.

Mr. Hopkins says:—"I maintain we have as good queen-breeders in New Zealand as there are in the United States—why should we not? Skill and carefulness are the necessary qualifications, and who will deny that we have queen-breeders of this stamp in New Zealand? In the next place, surely we have enough of different strains, the progeny of those imported, to ensure the avoidance of too much in-and-in breeding for the next fifty years or more. Then, why need we import more at present at great cost? It is in my opinion utter foolishness to do so until we have utilised the strains we have. Then, again, how are we to know that any queens we are fortunate enough to receive alive are better than those we already possess? We cannot judge them on sight or by pedigree; the

best we can do is to deal with a reliable queen-breeder, and we can do that in New Zealand. We have no need to go further."

I do not think any queen-breeder, whether he breeds for sale or not, will agree with the above. All breeders have imported queens in the past, and I believe that they will continue to do so. The average beekeeper must look to the breeders to get improved stocks. When breeders import new stock, they test it. If it is not an improvement, naturally they will not buy the same strain again. I ask Mr. Hopkins, how can we know that our stock is as good as the best American unless we import some to make a comparison by? He is much concerned, too, about the price, but surely that is a matter for the importer and his customers to settle. I myself am ordering some queens. If they are better than any I have got, I shall consider them cheap; if not as good, then it will be worth the price to know that I am ahead of the American breeders; nevertheless I might then try some other strain.

QUEEN EXCLUDERS.

(By ROBERT GIBB, Menzies Ferry.)

Having a few minutes to spare one day last week, when in the office of the Southland A. and P. Association, I picked up a copy of the New Zealand Farmer, and in casually looking over the pages I noticed a tirade by Mr. Hopkins against the use of queen excluders. He is evidently trying to get at one of our worthy inspectors for his audacity in writing up these useful articles. Now, I have not seen the article he refers to, nor do I know who wrote it, but as it happens Mr. Hopkins tries to clinch his argument by reciting what happened at Waerenga State Apiary when I was in charge of the queen-rearing operations there.

He states:—"On one occasion when visiting the Waerenga Apiary I saw to my surprise large clusters of bees on the fronts of about six three-storey hives. Some of the clusters would make good-sized swarms. . . . On examining the first hive I unexpectedly found a queen excluder above the brood-nest. When asked whether there were excluders on all the hives, he (the boy in charge) said they were on all, and that he had been instructed to put them on by the apiary inspector, . . . (This refers to me, R.G.). I ordered their removal at once, and on each hive where the bees had clustered outside another top box containing frames of foundation was placed immediately above the brood chamber. On my next visit, a week later, I learnt that the next morning after the adjustment of the hives there was not a bee in idleness outside; all were at work, and what was satisfactory, the frames of foundation had been worked out, and most of the honey stored below in the brood-nest had been carried above, thus affording plenty of breeding space in the brood chamber, and relieving the excessive heat of the hives, which had caused the evil."

Now, mark you, Mr. Hopkins contends that the use of queen excluders prevents the queen from laying to her full capacity, hence small colonies and poor crops; but these queens confined to ten frames were able to fill three supers with bees and honey, and hang a decent swarm outside as well. That is good enough for me, as when the hives get over three storeys high they are too tall for me, and I haven't time to go round with a ladder to get up to the top storey. Mr. Hopkins says it was bad management to have the bees hanging out. I admit that, but when all one's supers are full of honey (and that honey not worth extracting, being thick manuka honey) and no more material on hand (and Mr. Hopkins knows I wired him to that effect), what is a fellow to do?

He states that the bees were all in next morning after the extra super was put on. If the excluder was the cause of the cluster hanging out, why did he not take it out and leave it at that? No; he put on another super—just what I would have done if I had had the super in time, and the bees would have gone in just the same, with the excluder on.

Mr. Hopkins states that excluders are the cause of clogged brood-nests and excessive swarming. Now I emphatically deny that where room could be given at Waerenga there were clogged brood-nests. Furthermore, during the whole time that I had charge of the Waerenga Apiary there were only two at Wyncham, and Mr. Robert Stewart's at Crookston all of swarms. In my own yard at Menzies Ferry, in Mr. Jas. Allan's the bees work through queen excluders, and clogged brood-nests are unknown; in fact, at the end of the season we are confronted with brood-nests clogged with pollen and brood and not an ounce of honey. A case in point is worth relating. Mr. Hopkins and I called on Robt. Stewart at Crookston. Queen excluders were scattered all around, for Bob had just been taking them out, the season being over. Mr. Hopkins, true to his pet aversion, said:—

"I see you use queen excluders here?"

"Oh, yes," was Bob's quiet rejoinder; "we could not manage without them."

"But you must get your brood-nest clogged with honey and restrict the laying power of your queens?"

"Oh, no, we don't," said Bob, "and if you don't believe me open any you like and see for yourself."

Mr. Hopkins indicated one. Bob opened it: no honey—had to be fed; opened another—same result, and so on through four or five. Then as a last shot Mr. Hopkins said, "Well, you must have excessive swarming." "No," said the redoubtable Bob, "that particular hive you are looking at has not swarmed for five years, and out of 250 colonies I had only 19 swarms, and I took no special pains to stop them."

But it is results that count. In the year that I had charge of Waerenga, we started with sixteen colonies, ten of them miserable little box hives with black queens. I transferred these, treated three for foul-brood, increased to 110 (60 colonies

and 50 nuclei), took two tons of honey in combs and extracted, and sold £50 worth of queens. Mr. Hopkins has the audacity to call that bad management. Let him publish the balance sheets of three Government apiaries that were then in vogue. I am sure we would all like to see how they pan out, for I don't know of anyone who does know other than Mr. Hopkins.

In conclusion, let me say that if queen excluders block brood-nests and cause excessive swarming, then I am satisfied with my little lot down here, for last year I had eleven tons from 100 hives, and this year fourteen tons from 138 (spring count), and Mr. Allan, who uses excluders throughout, has ten tons from 100 hives. If Mr. Hopkins wishes to reply, let it be through this Journal, for I recognise no other in New Zealand.

QUEEN EXCLUDERS.

(By E. A. EARP.)

The season is at hand when it is advantageous to use queen excluders. During the height of brood-rearing, and in order not to cramp the queen, she should be allowed the full use of the super, so that large number of worker bees may be raised to work the main crop. It is not wise to bring the excluders into use too early, and never until such time as the bees are working freely in the super. By cramping the queen fewer bees are produced, and small returns will be netted. Every encouragement must be given to the queen to lay to her utmost, and by so doing populous colonies will be produced. The best time to put the excluders on the hives is when the main flow sets in and the bees are busy bringing in the nectar. Too many beekeepers make the mistake of putting on the excluders when the supers are first placed on the hives, and it is not an easy matter to get the bees to work in the supers even if combs of honey are raised from the brood-chamber, as excluders tend to make the passage between the lower storey and the upper more difficult for the bees. Before placing on the excluders make a careful examination of the colony to note its condition and to take stock of the number of frames of brood in the hive. If the brood-chamber is full of brood the combs may be manipulated so as to provide the queen with ample room for laying during the period which follows. The best plan is to place the majority of frames of capped brood over the excluder, and to substitute empty combs, taking care to see that the queen is confined below. As the bees hatch out over the excluder they will become accustomed to passing through it, and as fast as the cells become vacant they will be filled with honey. If eggs are raised with the brood, care must be taken to see that the bees do not raise queen-cells, for in the latter case the hive may swarm out, leaving one or more virgins in the top storey, and these queens, being confined to the hive, cannot get out to be mated, and will eventually develop into drone layers. Within one week after raising the brood examine the combs in the super to note if any queen-cells have been raised. If any are found they must be destroyed. The advantage of the use of queen-excluders is in saving labour at the time of

extracting, by doing away with the work of picking over the combs. Much time is lost in this operation, and extracting is retarded when everything should be hurried. It is only by the use of excluders that bee-escapes can be employed, and in many seasons, depending largely on the weather, these have been brought into use.

—Journal of Agriculture (Dec. issue.)

NOTES FOR THE MONTH.

The extracting should be finished now as soon as possible, and the bees disturbed as little as possible after this. The extracting combs which have been put back on the hives to be cleaned up can be removed as soon as the bees clean the honey out of them. If they are slow in carrying the honey down into the brood chamber, the mat can be put between, with the corner turned back. If there is no better place to store the combs, the supers can be left on above the mat all the winter.

All the extracting utensils should be washed and covered up for the winter. Cappings wax should be rendered down and cleaned. Use soft water only in melting operations. Boil the cappings up in plenty of water, and strain through coarse cheese cloth, folding the cloth over and wringing it to squeeze the last of the wax out.

If roofs are allowed to get in a leaky condition, a sufficient sum must be set aside out of the season's returns to buy new roofs in a year or two. It is much better, however, to get good lids and make them up properly in the first place, so that they are never likely to leak.

Mice are beginning to come about the hives in search of winter quarters. Lay a little poisoned wheat for them in dry spots beneath the hives.

Mr. GILLING'S ADDRESS.

(N.Z. Farmer.)

Mr. H. W. Gilling, managing director of the New Zealand Co-operative Honey Producers' Association, Ltd., was present at the field day meeting in the interests of his Association, and to enable him to become better acquainted with the Waikao Branch shareholders. During the day an informal meeting, at the invitation of the latter, was held, at which Mr. Gilling gave an address on the work of his Association and the honey trade generally, and also answered a number of questions.

A few remarks on the progress of the above Association will here be in order. It is generally known among our commercial beekeepers of several years' standing that some four years ago a few enterprising Taranaki beekeepers, realising the need of organisation among our commercial honey raisers in order that their products should be placed upon the market in a proper manner, and the raisers receive fair value, con-

NEW ZEALAND BEEKEEPERS JOURNAL.

Regularly each month we have sent you the New Zealand Beekeepers Journal and believe that you appreciate it as we have not received any instructions to discontinue.

You have evidently overlooked the small subscription due and we shall be glad therefore if you will send us by return mail the amount standing against you.

1 Year to June 30th. 1917. 3/6.

ceived the idea of forming a trading Association, the shareholders being confined to beekeepers. As everyone is aware, the first three or four years of the life of an institution of this kind is the most critical period of its existence, requiring the most skilful and careful management to guide it along the road to success. The N.Z.H.P.A. fortunately had men of skill to direct it, and it is questionable whether a more able man than Mr. Gilling could have been chosen for managing director, as results plainly show.

The confidence now placed in the Association's system of trading is enabling it to rapidly absorb the bulk of the honey business, both the export and local trade, vastly to the benefit of producers. Doubtless there are a good few of our beekeepers that have not yet taken advantage of the benefits held out by the Association, but these must eventually realise the great value of co-operation, and fall into line.

With regard to the present season's output and prevailing prices, the approximate honey crop for the Dominion is estimated by the Department of Agriculture at 1,250 tons, which, if we reckon it at an all-round figure of 5d. per lb., totals in value in the neighbourhood of £60,000—not a bad little sum from the work of the hive-bee.

Regarding the local trade, Mr. Gilling informed me that his Association had already received orders for 2,000 cases of honey, and as the cases usually contain forty-eight 2-lb. tins, this means a trifle under 79 tons. The local prices fixed for this season—that is, the price the Association charges to its wholesale customers—is 15/- per dozen 2 lb. tins, allowing the usual trade discount as profit.

Since the local contracts were made advices have come to hand from England that prices have so far advanced there that £70 per ton is now guaranteed for New Zealand honey of A grade and light amber B grade landed at Bristol. Other grades remain at last year's prices. The New Zealand Honey Producers' Association are now advancing 4¾d. per lb. on the above two grades, and 4¼d. on lower grades. All payments are made by the Association on the 20th of the month following that on which the honey has been delivered at any one of the grading stores, and the inspection grading notes signed, irrespective of whether it has been shipped or not, and all charges over 8d. per case grading expenses are paid by the Association. If the freights do not advance beyond all reason, there is certain to be a substantial bonus after the honey is sold in addition to the sums advanced.

Some of our contributors (says Western Honey Bee) write pretty good epigrams:—"No man ever got nervous prostration from pushing his business; it is when the business pushes him that it tells on him."—"We are told that a beekeeper's convention is no place for business; but if it is no place for the business of the beekeeper, then the beekeeper has no business there."

Correspondence.

(TO THE EDITOR.)

Sir,—As President of the National Beekeepers' Association, I waited on Mr. J. A. Frostick, Efficiency Board Commissioner for Canterbury, with reference to the beekeeping industry and recruiting. I explained to the Commissioner the necessity for expert knowledge with regard to the beekeeper's business, and the amount of attention that was required in season to prevent stocks seriously deteriorating. The position, as explained by the Commissioner, made it quite evident that no considerable exemption could be given to beekeepers, but the Board is prepared to help us in every way, and it now rests with the beekeepers themselves to arrange some scheme whereby soldiers' holdings may be managed in their absence, and to put that scheme before the Board and obtain their assistance in carrying it out. I am referring the matter to members of the Executive, but in the meantime, before anything definite can be done, it is necessary to know how many there are dependent on beekeeping for a living who are in the first and second reserves. As the matter is already urgent in some cases, I would ask that all beekeepers in the reserves who would require assistance in the management of their apiaries when called up send in their names immediately to the Secretary, Mr. W. B. Bray, Duvauchelles, stating the number of colonies kept, and in how many apiaries; also whether assistance required would be complete or only partial.—I am, etc.,

J. RENTOUL.

(TO THE EDITOR.)

Sir,—A few errors which crept into your last issue with reference to ourselves has caused us a lot of work, and also resulted in a good deal of misunderstanding amongst the beekeepers, resulting in some instances in no small financial loss. The advance on this season's honey should read:— $4\frac{1}{8}$ d. for medium amber B grade and C grade, and $4\frac{3}{4}$ d. for A grade and light amber B grade. The bonus on 1915 shipments is $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per lb., not $\frac{1}{8}$ d., as the printer makes it to appear. The prices mentioned in the report of the meeting of the directors is, therefore, sadly astray, and we must disclaim all responsibility for their publication.

Our southern canvasser is finding "R.B.'s" reference to cases of honey having lain for some time in the Auckland grading depot awaiting shipment and the inference drawn that it would be almost impossible to obtain shipping space has seriously affected our export. Arrangements have been made which will prevent a recurrence of the trouble.

Now, Sir, I sincerely think that anything submitted for publication that is likely to injuriously affect our co-operative movement should be submitted to us for reply, the reply to be published in the same issue. We are not afraid of criticism,

but the publication of criticism a month ahead of our reply is an unfair handicap. If the Journal were a daily paper the same would not apply. The Journal, we take it, is out of help the co-operative movement, believing that the welfare of the industry hangs upon its success. That being the case, we trust that steps will be taken to guard us against injury from the printer's devil and the errors of our critical friends.

As regards shipping space, we will certainly find some difficulty in getting the honey away, but that does not relieve us from the obligations under the contract. We are not doing our best unless we get all the available honey to the grading stores as soon as possible ready to catch the first opportunity offering to ship. If it does happen to lie for some time awaiting shipment, it will not be at the loss of the individual shipper; the extra storage will be a charge on the general working expenses of the Company. Neither will the producer have to wait until the honey is shipped for his cheque, as we pay out on the 20th of the month following arrival at grading depot.—I am, etc.,

H. W. GILLING.,
Managing Director.

March 16th, 1917.

(TO THE EDITOR.)

Sir,—Mr. Hopkins, in your December issue, certainly condemns the flat covers. If he would read over my letter in the September issue, he would see that what he used forty years ago (and found detrimental to the bees) is not the same design that I have in use. I mentioned that my covers are kept $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch off the frames. This could be made more or less if desired. They also have ventilation holes in the ends. If $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch is not sufficient air space above the frames for some beekeepers, they could make it, say, $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches, which would give as much or a little more air space than would the gable end cover which Mr. Hopkins has been used to.

I think probably the flat covers used by Mr. Hopkins in 1878 came close down on top of the frames, leaving no air space and no ventilation, and are, therefore, unlike the flat covers I have in use, and which many of our leading beekeepers of to-day recommend. Bees in a natural state in a tree have no top ventilation.

Mr. Hopkins refers to the illustrations in Root's A.B.C. of Bee Culture. Yes, look at them, and you can see that the majority of the leading beekeepers of America use flat covers, many of them being simply a flat board cleated at the ends. Mr. Hopkins refers also to the economy in making flat covers. Let him go to a manufacturer of bee-hives and get a quotation for the covers mentioned in the September issue, and he will find his mistake. I have made both, and the gable end is the cheaper.

Regarding the effects of wind, the projections on the gable covers catch the full force of the wind, and if not fastened on are liable to be blown off. If one is at hand to replace them,

so good, but what about out-yards? My flat covers never blow off because they have no projections to catch the wind, and they weigh 16½ lbs. against the gable cover's 8 lbs.—I am, etc.,

A. L. LUKE.

P.S.—Can anyone inform me whether the power extractor with honey pump attached is a success? Would it be possible to lift the honey 16 feet?—A.L.L.

[Re honey pumps, I am informed by Mr. Earp, apiary instructor, that the latest honey pumps are entirely successful. The earlier styles were not a success, as the inlet and outlet pipes were the same size. Now that they are made with the outlet pipe a size larger they do the work fine. The inlet is ¾-inch and the outlet 1 inch. Owners of the old style should get the outlet hole bored to take a larger pipe. An improvement can also be made by putting in a "T" joint between the extractor and the pump. Put a stop plug in the foot of the T, and when extracting is finished this can be removed to drain the last drop out of the connecting pipe. The drainage from the pipe beyond the pump gathers above the pump, and can be drained out also by giving the pump a few turns backwards. In this way there is no trouble with honey candying in the pump.—Ed.]

(TO THE EDITOR.)

Sir,—I notice that Mr. Stewart has donated £5 towards keeping the Journal going. I think, Sir, that another way would be to open a column in the Journal for the names of those who are willing to pay 10/- per year for it. I am sure that the result would surprise you, and would enable us to have a much more up-to-date monthly than at present. If you decide on this course, you can put me down as a subscriber at 10/- per annum, and the subscription will be sent along at once.—I am, etc.,

NEW CHUM.

Kelso, February, 1917.

[I have met another subscriber who is willing to pay 10/-, and several others consider 3/6 is too small. At the end of the year we shall have to consider the question of ceasing publication or raising the subscription rate to at least five shillings. There are a large number of subscriptions overdue, and besides these we must get a good many new ones to enable us to carry on. Only six new ones were secured through the offer of queens, and I have secured five others myself. Quite a number of readers I have met on my travels say it would be a great pity to cease publication, and I think the majority of readers will agree that it should be kept going, even if the rate is raised. I shall be pleased to hear from others willing to pay an increase, and will publish a list before the Conference is held.—Ed.]

FAILING QUEENS.

(TO THE EDITOR.)

of queen cells—or, in other words, transference of larvæ, through many generations—has had a bad effect on our (meaning American) strains of bees. This I can quite understand, and it exactly bears out the warning I have given scores of times of what was likely to occur sooner or later in New Zealand if the grafting method of queen-rearing came to be generally adopted by our breeders. I long ago came to the conclusion that the failure of queens from America to reach this country safely during the last fifteen years or so—that is, the great majority of them, notwithstanding the improved conditions under which they are now carried—was undoubtedly due to constitutional weakness as compared with those of former years, when I could always reckon upon getting 50 per cent. through alive, and frequently the whole of them.

In seeking for some explanation of this deterioration, I could come to no other conclusion than that it was due to the system of queen-rearing that had been very largely adopted in America—viz., grafting and transference of larvæ. Included in this system as practised generally in the past is the "swarm box," with its limited number of nurse bees for starting the grafted cells, the baby nuclei, and the generally economy of bees from first to last in the rearing of the queens, upon which we must entirely depend for the production of our strains of bees, be they good, bad, or indifferent.

Although Doolittle was not the inventor of the system, he was the first to bring it into general notice in his book published in 1889, since when it has been largely practised in America and elsewhere. But the late E. L. Pratt ("Swarthmore") I have always considered as the greatest exponent of the grafting method. I believe he raised more queens by it than all the rest of the grafters during his time put together. He, however, found by experience that it was necessary to modify the system from time to time to raise good queens. He departed from his original plans in several respects, but the declaration in his last book showed a complete "volte face," and a condemnation of the grafting method he had so largely practised. He said (page 10): "It will be acknowledged, I believe, that eggs thus placed naturally by a queen are at once removed from that artificial environment brought about by the hand method of grafting; and, being already liberally supplied with food naturally placed by bees, better, longer lived, and stronger queens are quite likely to result, to say nothing of the saving of labour."

This statement, coming from a man who had raised many thousands of queens on the grafting system, and who had been compelled from experience to acknowledge the superiority of queens reared under the non-grafting method, should be sufficient to convince the most ardent admirer of the former system that it is against the production of healthy, robust, and long-lived queens such as we need to produce good strains of bees.—I am, &c.,

I. A. HOPKINS.

HONEY CROP PROSPECTS.

The Director of the Horticulture Division has received from the Apiary Instructors the following report concerning the honey crop prospects:—

Wellington.—As anticipated, the crop generally throughout my district has been an average one. In some cases, however, exceptional yields have been secured, as instanced by forty-eight colonies yielding three and a-half tons. Prices are considerably ahead of last year, and, notwithstanding the shortage of boats for the export trade, they are likely to be maintained. Tinware is such a high price that raising the price of honey is necessary to cover the extra cost. The demand is very keen.—F. A. Jacobsen. 2/3/17.

Christchurch.—The season is finishing up rather better than was anticipated. A little nectar has been gathered during the last fortnight. Many beekeepers are now in hand with the final extracting, but the crop generally will only be a little better than last year. The bulk of the crop has been secured by the larger beekeepers, who purpose exporting. Sections are scarce—none offering; extracted honey, 5d. to 5¼d. in bulk; beeswax, from 1/- to 1/4, according to quality. L. Bowman. 1/3/17.

Dunedin.—There is little fresh to report. Extracting has finished, and beekeepers are busy putting bees into winter quarters. Very little honey forward. Prices are firm, and there is every indication that market rates will steadily rise. Bulk honey, 4¾d. to 5d.; 10-lb. tins, 4/6 to 6/-; pat honey, none forward. Sections are scarce, and command ready sale at 7/- to 8/- per dozen.—E. A. Earp. 6/3/17.

SUBSCRIPTIONS.

The following subscriptions have been received during the month:—

Messrs. J. W. Annan, C. Aitchison, S. Anthony, L. Anderson, Barrett & Bray, F. Butt, H. Brickell, W. Boston, R. Beattie, J. Banks, A. Callick, L. D. Carter, W. Cattermole (2 years), F. J. Coombe, J. Cooper, A. Dalziel, A. J. Dennis, A. J. D'Arcy, J. W. Excell, A. France, A. Fraser, R. Gray, S. Herbert, J. Hunter, I. James, C. A. Jacobsen, W. Kennedy, A. Kendall, T. Kilfoyle, A. Lemard, P. Martin, G. L. Murray, W. Parrant, D. Pethig, Mrs. M. Pinny, Messrs. C. E. Quaife (2 years), H. Rowbotham, C. P. Roys, E. Simpson, C. Scherer, C. Stewart, G. Saville (2 years), F. J. Severin, Mrs. D. Wadsworth, Mr. J. Walworth, Mrs. H. W. Warcup (2 years), Messrs. W. Watson (2 years), R. Whiting, J. E. Yeoman.

Subscribers are reminded that the year ends with the June number. We should like to have the money in before June, so that it can be included in the balance sheet for the annual Conference.

If a pink slip is enclosed with this copy, please remit the amount due to

W. B. BRAY, Editor,
Wainui, Christchurch.

Good Things from Everywhere.

VALUE OF BEES IN FRUIT GROWING.

The busy little bee, in its relation to the pollinating of fruit blossoms, is one of the most useful and valuable little workers in the way of pollinating the various kinds of fruit blossoms. It is true various other insects carry pollen, but if all the honey bees were removed during the fruit blossom season it is safe to say that there would not be enough fruit or berries produced to pay for the work of caring for the trees and vines.

Professor Waite, of Washington, whose experiments were published in the Year Book of the United States Department of Agriculture, reports as follows:—Out of 2,586 blossoms covered with gauze netting, only three apples set fruit; of these the Baldwin, Spitzenburg, and Famous set some fruit. Darwin stated that one hundred flower heads on plants protected by a net produced a single seed, while a hundred heads on plants growing outside, which were visited by bees, yielded 168 grains of seeds. Darwin's experiments with white clover proved that cross-pollination is necessary; 20 covered heads yielded a single seed; while 10 unprotected heads visited by the bees yielded 220 seeds. The results indicate that the insect visits are of prime importance in the pollinating of fruit blossoms.

One of our correspondents is doing his bit to advertise the use of honey. He has a printed letter-head of his own, and in the margin are a number of small paragraphs, as follows:—

"There is more nourishment in a pound of honey than there is in a pound of beef steak."

"Meat contains 65 per cent. water, besides the fibre, which is indigestible."

"Honey is 20 per cent. water, and is almost all digested."

"One can eat 3 lbs. of honey at the price of 1 lb. of butter."

"Honey is not only a medicine, but a food direct from nature."

Comb-honey is always retailed by the section, not by weight. Why, then, let the dealer make a double profit off you by selling to him by the pound? For he does just this, buying by the pound, and selling at prices that would give him a margin per section if bought at section prices, and annexing the difference.

Mice.—Some ill-made hives have entrances deep enough to invite the mice to warm quarters and a winter's feasting. Such hives should have a strip of $\frac{1}{4}$ or $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch mesh wire netting tacked over the entrance.

In the matter of foundation weights, do try the lightest you can get and paint it with wax. No stretch, no sag, no break, and no need of wire. Poppleton used it in 12 x 12 frames without wires for years.

Honey Tanks.—One of our leading apiarists (says the "Western Honey Bee") greatly prefers square or rectangular tanks to round, contending that they are handier and more economical for the migratory beekeeper or for out-yards. They take up less room in a house and give larger content for the space occupied and metal used. Also, they are more readily moved, and when placed on the truck or waggon can be filled with small material or even colonies of bees, with little loss of space. He prefers a tank about 3 x 6 or 3 x 5 ft., 3 ft. deep, as this takes the full sheet of metal without waste. Angle-irons are riveted to the sides at half-depth, to which two braces are bolted, not riveted, which can be quickly removed when desired. Make a light cover of wood. Such a tank permits rapid "ripening," and can be reached to skim, at any time.

Organisations Cost Money.—A national organisation which really amounts to much must have money, and we do not see how they can get much of it. It needs a permanent office with a paid staff in constant communication, directly or through State associations, with the entire membership. Without money, and considerable of it, a National Beekeepers' Association is merely a few of the most competent and enterprising, who get together once a year, exchange views of mutual benefit, and talk about what they could accomplish if they had the money.—Western Honey Bee.

Even State organisations are hard enough to keep up. The cost of bringing in the commercial beekeepers, widely scattered, often in places difficult of access, is almost prohibitive. If they are good and successful beemen, they are very intelligent, and quick to recognise the value of organisation, but contact seems essential to create the enthusiasm which leads to action. And few of these outlying beekeepers can afford to attend distant meetings, or think they can afford to pay money to support an organisation whose workings they never see. Furthermore, they maintain only a very moderate enthusiasm regarding co-operation, because of the very satisfactory profit now derived from individual effort. Only financial squeezing will ever lead to successful co-operation.—Western Honey Bee.

Most anyone can keep bees, but it takes persistent effort, both mental and physical, to make them keep you.

A young friend asked me: "Do you grease your smoker bellows?" You bet I do, with linseed oil or axle-grease. All other leather, too! Everything is kept in out of the sun and rain. I think it pays and pays big. (Good little kink—but don't use linseed oil; it dries hard, and is liable to crack the leather. Neatsfoot is best of all.—Ed.)

It pays to be kind and gentle with your bees, using very little smoke. Like the dairyman in Washington who got unusual yields of milk from his cows by mixing large quantities of love with his ration! (Beekeeping and sentiment is a poor mixture, but any treatment that jars or irritates the bees more than is absolutely necessary is a financial mistake, for cross bees take more time to handle.—Ed.)

If we write our successes as well as our failures to the Honey Bee it will give others a chance to profit by our experience.

Fail—yet rejoice, because no less
 The failure which makes thy distress
 May teach another full success.
 It may be that, in some great need,
 Thy life's poor fragments are decreed
 To help build up a lofty deed.—Adelaide A. Proctor.

—Western Honey Bee.

CONTAINERS.

AN AMERICAN VIEW.

Every year we have inquiries from honey growers who wish to buy second-hand cans and cases. We have had more of them lately because of the increased prices which this year will be asked.

We think it a very poor policy for honey growers to use second-hand containers. When buying honey, we always insist on new cans and cases.

The honey grower is entitled to get a proper price for his commodity as much as anybody else, and if new cans and cases cost more than second-hand, he should add that price when selling.

Honey in old packages discourages the buyer, and gives him a talking point for reducing his buying price. He also is running some risk, as the grower who uses second-hand packages may not have carefully washed out these tins, and the contents may be contaminated with kerosene, or whatever the can originally held.

Every person buys with the eyes first, even the wholesale honey buyer; so, Mr. Grower, make your offer look as attractive as possible.

From the buyer's point of view, a barrel is a very poor package. Practically all honey granulates in time, and granulated honey cannot be drawn out through the bung-hole. The hoops would have to be taken off, the barrel taken to pieces, and then the container is destroyed, unless you have a cooper to rebuild it. Furthermore, granulated honey cannot be melted in a barrel, but can be very easily melted when in tins by placing the tin in hot water.

—Western Honey Bee.

Italian Queen Bees.

BEEKEEPERS! Your attention a moment, please!

SIX TONS OF HONEY per 100 COLONIES.

How does that average strike you? That was the actual result obtained in this district last season. The season was nothing exceptional, but the Bees that produced that splendid result were not too slow: they were what we call hustlers; no "Beg pardon" about them.

THE STRAIN WAS GOOD—THAT'S THE SECRET.

It will pay you to have Queens from this strain.

I can supply you. Let me know your requirements.

PRICES:

Untested ..	4/- each	..	10 for 35/-	..	20 for 60/
Tested ..	7/6 each	..	three for 20/-		
Select Tested ..	12/6 each				

A. J. D'ARCY,

20 Linton Street - Palmerston North.

SEASON 1916-17.

Price List of ITALIAN QUEENS.

	PRICES :				
	1	2	3	4	5
Untested	5/-	9/6	14/-	18/-	22/-
Select Untested—1/- extra per Queen.					
Tested	10/-	18/-	25/-	33/-	40/-
Select Tested	12/6	22/6			
Breeders	20/-				

All Queens guaranteed free from Foul-brood, Bee Paralysis, and all other diseases, and bred from Pure Stock, which have been selected for hardiness, disease-resisting, good-working, and non-swarmling qualities.

Ninety-eight per cent. of Untested Queens guaranteed purely mated.

TERMS: Nett cash with order. Cheques to have exchange added.

P.O. Order Office, Tapanui.

Tested Queens for delivery from October 1st; Untested from about November 20th to first week in April, 1917.

Postal Address:

**R. STEWART, CROOKSTON,
OTAGO.**

EXTRACTORS.

Tons of honey are lost in many apiaries because the bees have not sufficient room during the height of the honey flow.

Extract early and give all the room possible for future stores. Our latest model extractors are beauties. Two, four, six, and eight-frame machines kept in stock. The power machines, four, six, and eight, are particularly useful machines.

We have also the Gilson engine, 1 and 1½ horse-power. This machine is one of the best, if it is not the very best, cheap engine on the market.

The Bentall 2 horse-power, made by one of the best British houses, is a machine anyone would be proud to own. It will drive two eight-frame extractors, a chaffcutter, pump, circular saw, or do any other work about a farm.

Correspondence invited.

ALLIANCE BOX CO., Ltd.
Castle Street - Dunedin.