

THE NEW ZEALAND BEEKEEPER

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AUGUST, 1954



OFFICIAL ORGAN of the
NATIONAL BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION
OF NEW ZEALAND
(Incorporated).

*(An Organisation for the advancement of
the Beekeeping Industry in New Zealand)*

Better Beekeeping

Better Marketing

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ANNUAL REPORT, 1954

TO MEMBERS

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In submitting to you a report on the activities of the Association for the year ended 31st May, 1954, it is desirable to refer to two specific matters which were dealt with in the Annual Report of twelve months ago.

It will be recalled that last year your Executive was concerned as to the future of organised marketing in view of the Government's declared policy of transferring the full responsibility of operating the central blending and packing plant from the Marketing Department to a Producer Controlled Authority.

As you are aware, negotiations between Industry representatives and the Government resulted in an agreement being reached whereby all registered beekeepers within the Dominion owning thirty colonies of bees and over, were placed in possession of the plan for the reorganisation of the marketing structure, as submitted to the Government on request by your Executive.

Meetings of producers were held in the various production centres throughout the Dominion shortly after the last Annual Conference, and producers were invited to affirm or otherwise approval of the scheme submitted. The result was an overwhelming vote in support of the proposals, and this was followed in September last by a joint meeting held in Wellington of the members of the Dominion Executive and of the Honey Marketing Committee.

At this meeting very careful consideration was given to the question of preparing a detailed statement for submission to the Minister of Agriculture as a prerequisite to the framing and gazetting of the neces-

sary regulations required to give full effect to the implementation of the plan as approved by the Industry.

Much care was taken in drafting this statement, which was presented to, and approved by the Minister, but despite this, the regulations when gazetted were found to be unsatisfactory in so far as they did not contain some of the most important matters upon which the Industry's agreement to the plan had been based.

In particular these matters were:

(1) The provision of the right to nomination to the controlling authority of any registered beekeeper owning thirty colonies of bees or more; (2) the definite provision by right of funds from the Seals Levy to the National Beekeepers' Association; and (3) the provision of voting rights to a producer who supplied his product either to a packer, or to a producer-packer.

In this regard an immediate protest was lodged with the Minister, accompanied with a request to have the regulations amended without delay and before the election of producer members of the Authority was commenced.

Unfortunately the amendments were not made and the election of members proceeded on the basis of the regulations as gazetted. Subsequently the Minister indicated that the matter of effecting the required amendments would be referred to the newly-elected Authority for its consideration, and it is understood that this has now been done.

The result of the election of Producer members to the Honey Marketing Authority was declared on the 18th March, 1954, when the following were elected: Messrs R. Davidson, E. A. Field, W. T. Herron and W. W. Nelson. The other members of the Authority are Messrs K. B.

Longmore (representing the Government) and E. D. Williams (representing the National Beekeepers' Association).

The second item in last year's report to which reference is made is that of securing financial assistance for the Industry by way of a subsidy on the Seals Levy, in recognition of the immensely valuable contribution made by the Beekeeping Industry to the national economy of the Dominion through the pollination service provided to horticulture and agriculture.

The representations made to the Government by your Executive in this regard have not, as yet, been met with success. It can be taken for granted that the newly-elected Honey Marketing Authority will make every possible effort in endeavouring to ensure that Honey Producers will receive an adequate return from the sale of their produce, and if this is found to be impracticable under existing conditions, doubtless the Authority will take active steps to support the case already submitted to the Government by your Executive to secure for the Beekeeping Industry a satisfactory return for the services provided by the Industry to the country as a whole.

Owing to lack of finance during the greater part of the past year, your Executive was unable to hold their usual mid-year meeting, and consequently matters requiring attention had to be dealt with by correspondence, which is by no means a satisfactory arrangement.

Nevertheless members of the Executive devoted a good deal of their time in travelling and addressing producers in the various centres in connection with the Marketing Plan, and in addition attended a three-day meeting in Wellington in September. The cost involved in these meetings was met by the Government.

The question of applying to the Price Tribunal for a general increase in honey prices has been given consideration by the Executive since the last general wage order was announced, but in the absence of any

reliable information as to the actual increased costs, which could be expressed in terms of per pound of honey, the matter was held over for further consideration.

As has previously been advised, an application was lodged with the Director of Price Control for authority for producers to charge 1/6 per pound on bulk honey supplied into consumers' own containers, in line with the decision of last year's Conference.

Subsequent correspondence in connection with our application has already been published in "The N.Z. Beekeeper" and members will have noted that the Price Tribunal, after referring the matter to the Honey Marketing Authority, decided to defer the application until such time as a new general price amendment was applied for.

The Director of Price Control was thereupon advised that this decision was not acceptable to the Industry. On the 18th June the Director advised that the Honey Marketing Authority had now informed him "that should the National Beekeepers' Association desire to take up the question of an increase in apiary sales only, they had no objection to a new Price Order being issued for sales of this kind."

The Director then asked to be advised whether we now desired to have a new Price Order gazetted to cover the sale of honey filled into customers' own containers. Obviously the answer given was "Yes," together with an expression of protest against the unwarranted delay which once again had deprived many beekeepers of a justifiable increase in price, which should have been granted before the last production season commenced.

Strong protests against the manner in which the Honey Marketing Authority Election was conducted earlier in the year were made by members in two of the main producing areas, viz., Southland and Waikato, and these were duly submitted to the Minister of Agriculture for his consideration.

With regard to the Association's own affairs, it is once again regret-

able to have to report a decrease in the number of financial members as at the 31st May. While the overall figures show a decrease of 158 as compared with the previous year, it is of some comfort to be able to state that of this number no less than 140 are hobbyist beekeepers. Of these latter, 56 were members of the Wellington Branch, which has now ceased to function as a Branch of the National Association.

The past year has been a most difficult one in so far as funds for the General Account are concerned. Membership subscriptions under all readings received during the year ended 31st May, 1954, totalled £404/4/2, as compared with the sum of £478/8/11 in the previous year—a decrease of £138/4/9. When it is realised that over £800 of the total amount received into the General Fund came to hand in the last few months of the year, members will realise the difficulties under which our Executive have had to work for the greater portion of the period under review. Every endeavour should be made by Branch officials to encourage members to pay their subscriptions at the beginning of each year, instead of leaving them until the end of the season.

As will be noted from the Annual Statement of Accounts, the year commenced with a credit balance in the General Account of £77/6/2, while the credit balance at the 31st May, 1954, was £335/6/1. This result was made possible through two reasons only. First, there were no expenses incurred in regard to Executive meetings and travelling expenses were accordingly over £100 less than those of the previous year. The second reason is that the sum of £500 was received from the Marketing Authority from the Seals Fund, while the sum of £72/17/11 was received from the Marketing Department in honouring the obligation previously entered into in respect of the expenses of the Special Meeting of the Executive held in Wellington in February, 1953. It must be emphasised here that had it not been for these circumstances, this year's Conference could not have been held.

The Association's Trust Fund con-

tinues to maintain a satisfactory position. Despite a decrease in premium receipts of £22/6/- as compared with last year's figures, the account closed on the 31st May, 1954, with a credit balance of £318/14/3, as against £301/6/- at the 31st May, 1953, an increase of £17/8/3.

The thanks of members are extended to the Director of the Horticulture Division (Mr A. M. W. Greig), to the Superintendent of the Beekeeping Industry (Mr T. S. Winter), and to all other officers of the Department of Agriculture for their helpful co-operation and assistance throughout the year. The continued interest of these gentlemen in the welfare of our industry is very greatly appreciated.

To the retired member of the late Honey Marketing Committee (Mr F. D. Holt) we extend our thanks for his loyal services to the Industry, while last, but by no means least, we sincerely thank the Editor of our Journal (Mr J. McFadzien) and our Branch Secretaries for their continued good work throughout the year.

E. D. WILLIAMS,
President.

NOTICE BOARD

A CORRECTION

We have been asked to correct an error which occurred in the Marketing Division's figures quoted on page 11 of the May issue. "Total Sales Revenue from all Stocks" should read "Total Seals Revenue from all Sources."

MARKETING AUTHORITY

Mr E. D. Williams has been re-appointed to the Honey Marketing Authority as the representative of the National Beekeepers' Association for the current year.

INSTRUCTION COURSE

Particulars of the Timaru Course are given in the Department of Agriculture Notes in this issue.

A TRIBUTE

During the discussion on the Financial Statement at Conference, Mr T. F. Penrose referred to the work done by the General Secretary during the years since 1942 when he accepted this position. Mr Fraser had taken over the work at a critical time and had remained loyal to the Association through the years of Emergency Regulations and Price Control regardless of the large amount of administrative work which was involved. His guidance had been invaluable in framing the present Constitution and through his efforts the Association had reached its present position of authority and prestige. In spite of the inadequate salary paid during those years, he had stood by the beekeeping industry through difficult times, always taking a keen interest in the problems of producers, and for his faithful and efficient service he merited the warm appreciation of the industry.

Mr Penrose's tribute was supported by other speakers and was received with an enthusiastic round of applause.

SIR EDMUND HILLARY

A party comprising mostly New Zealanders and led by Sir Edmund Hillary visited the Himalayas in May and June of this year. The purpose of the expedition in this instance was to undertake exploratory work and scientific surveys in the Barun and Hongu Valleys. Unfortunately the venture was marred to some extent by accident and sickness but a large amount of information was collected and Sir Edmund has expressed satisfaction at the outcome of the expedition. In the course of the visits several prominent peaks were climbed for the first time.

It is reported that plans are now in train for a further expedition under Sir Edmund Hillary, the object being to climb Mt. Makalu, probably in 1956.

In all parts of the world the past year has been remarkable for the number of mountaineering expedi-

tions which have returned home licking their wounds. Everest has been climbed, and the others will be climbed eventually, but statements that such mountains have been "conquered" are decidedly premature.

MR E. A. FIELD

Following the election of officers at the Wellington Conference, the President mentioned the unique record of Mr E. A. Field, who had on this occasion declined nomination. Mr Field's service on the Executive extended over a period of 16 years, including 11 years as President, and was without parallel in the history of the Association. Now that he had been appointed Chairman of the Honey Marketing Authority, his time would be fully occupied in marketing work and his absence would mean a sad loss to the Executive. For the service he had rendered down the years the President extended sincere thanks on behalf of members.

Mr Field, in replying, acknowledged the help he had received during his term on the Executive and assured members that he would maintain his interest in the affairs of the Association as he did in the industry generally. He wished members of the new Executive every success in their work.

SYDNEY SHOW

The following extract is from a report on the Sydney 1954 Royal Easter Show appearing in "The Australasian Beekeeper":—

"An interesting feature was an entry by Mr D. A. Barrow of liquid and granulated honey, which arrived by air from New Zealand in time for judging. The entries scored first in their classes and also the highest number of points. The granulated entry was of the whitest, finest and firmest quality. This is perhaps the first exhibit of honey from New Zealand to our Royal Show."

Congratulations to Mr Barrow on his success.



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EXECUTIVE MEETING

A meeting of the General Executive was held in Wellington on August 2nd and 3rd, when all members were present. Mr E. D. Williams was in the chair. Particulars of the work of the Executive have been given in Branch circulars and in the Annual Report.

Insurance

The Secretary announced that under the Association's insurance policy with the New Zealand Insurance Company the limit for any one claim had now been raised from £250 to £500. There is no limit to the number of claims which may be made in any one year.

Price Order

An application for an adjustment

to the Price Order is being presented on the basis of increased packing costs supplied by the Marketing Authority and increased labour and vehicle costs as they apply under the recent cost survey.

Horticulture Division

Reference was made to recent work of the Horticulture Division and to further matters at present receiving attention, and members expressed appreciation of the help which had been given to the industry. In this connection the Executive decided to express its concern to the Minister regarding the staffing position in the Department and to request that conditions be improved by extending the salary scale and by providing allowances for protective clothing as in other Divisions.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON 4th AUGUST, 1954

ADDRESS BY HON. K. J. HOLYOAKE, MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE

Thank you for the invitation to open your Conference. It is a nice compliment and appreciated.

You have not had the easiest year, but despite everything there has been continued progress in production and in the industry, and the flow of honey has been better than last year with some exceptions.

The present trend is toward a decrease in the number of domestic beekeepers and a steady increase in most districts in the number of hives kept by commercial producers. I think statistics are useful on occasions. Statistics for the year ended 30th June, 1953, show a total of 12,530 registered apiaries containing 191,553 colonies of bees. Established apiaries and hives are fairly evenly distributed in all suitable beekeeping districts. The domestic and commercial groups of beekeepers and hive holdings are as follows:—

Group	No. of Beekeepers.	Hives Kept.
1-29 Hives	5,801	28,219
30 Hives or more	767	163,334

Good beekeeping conditions were experienced in all districts last season except on the West Coast of the South Island and in Central Otago and inland parts of Southland, where crops generally were poor. In other districts, comprising the greater part of the best beekeeping territory in New Zealand, the total crop and quality of the honey produced were much better than the previous year.

Heavy crops of manuka honey produced in North Auckland outweighed the better class of light-coloured honey procured from pasture sources in that area.

Overall production from commercial and domestic apiaries for the year ended 31st March, 1954, was estimated at 6,447 tons of honey and

225,645lbs. of commercial beeswax, which is approximately 2,550 tons of honey and 89,100lbs. of beeswax more than the previous season's total production. Approximately 5,700 tons of the total crop last season was produced in commercial apiaries of 30 hives and over, and the balance of 700 odd tons in domestic apiaries.

Beekeeping in New Zealand continued to expand during the year, particularly in newly developed pasture land areas in the North Island, and in comparatively remote back country districts in the South Island, where beekeepers are welcomed by farmers for the service rendered by the bees to agriculture in the pollination of clovers and other economic plants.

An important feature is the progressive development and installation of up-to-date labour-saving apiary and honey house equipment and a gradual improvement in the quality and condition of honey on the local retail market. In this connection it is pleasing to me to know that the advice and lead given in these matters by Departmental officers is being followed by producers to advantage in keeping down overhead costs and in the improvement in condition of the product.

The beekeeping industry has been assisted in many ways during the year. Technical advice on honey and a grading service covering all honey handled at the central depot on behalf of producers have been maintained. In the year ended 28th February, 1954, 20,359 cases of bulk honey were graded, including 8,129 cases for export. A total of 2,194 cases of honey with high moisture content could not be passed for export in that condition, and 16 tons submitted for grading was found to be suitable for industrial use only. Ten tons of honey below standard was rejected.

Last year I submitted some legislation to Parliament particularly dealing with your industry.

Inspection of Apiaries: Inspection of apiaries for control of bee diseases was maintained by field officers of the Department, assisted by a number of competent beekeepers in each district to carry out the work during the breeding season. I am informed that new methods dealing with bee diseases introduced in recent years are now showing excellent results.

New Legislation: To simplify apiary registration procedure and associated work as far as possible, the Apiaries Registration Regulations, 1953, were introduced in October last year. Clause 2 deals with neglected apiaries.

In the administration of the Apiaries Act, Inspectors have found that the odd beekeepers failed to maintain their apiaries in accordance with good beekeeping practice and allowed their hives and appliances to become so overgrown with noxious growth that an Inspector could not gain access to the hives for inspection for control of bee diseases. Clause 2 of the Bill enables an Inspector to put under notice a beekeeper in default and require him to clear the obstructions within a certain time.

Clause 3 replaces Section 6 of the Statutes Amendment Act, 1946, prohibiting the spraying or dusting of fruit trees when in bloom with any substance injurious to honey bees, and extends the prohibition to berry fruit plants, giving the necessary added protection against the possible poisoning of honey bees.

This measure was supported by orchardists and berry fruit growers in consultation with officers of the Department, and I am pleased to learn that orchardists and berry fruit growers alike have co-operated well in observing the prohibition, which gives protection to valuable pollinators. (No losses of bees due to arsenate of lead poisoning were reported during the year.)

Trials and experiments covering technical problems of importance to beekeeping were carried out during the year. The mounting problem of losses sustained by producers each year through excessive moisture in their honey has been tackled by Departmental officers, who have been successful in designing and making ready for use suitable equipment for the removal of this excess moisture. The equipment is now ready to be handed over to the Honey Marketing Authority, who contributed small sums during the experimental stages, at no further cost. Particulars of the plant will be published shortly for the information of all beekeepers, and I understand a working demonstration of the equipment will be given during this Conference.

Your Chairman has said that marketing has not gone as smoothly as it might. Certain contracts were running when it was decided to terminate the Marketing Department on 31st March, the end of their financial year. The residue of their work was handed over to a new Division of the Agricultural Department and the change-over was made from 1st December. The Honey Marketing Authority Regulations, which came into effect on 1st December, 1953, provided for the continuance of the Honey Marketing Committee as an Interim Authority. At the special request of the Committee, it was agreed that the Marketing Division would continue to act as its agent for a time and Mr Chudley remained as Chairman of the interim Authority.

An election held in terms of the Regulations resulted in the election of four members of the permanent Authority, to whom were added Mr Williams as a direct nominee of the Association and Mr Longmore as Government representative.

There were certain regulations which did not give full effect to the wishes of your Executive or Conference. I can take responsibility for that, but it was just the hurry and bustle of that particular time, when my Departmental officers were in consultation with the leaders of the industry on points which had to be approved by the industry, local officers, the Government and the Law Drafting Office. The change-over was not easy or simple.

Under the leadership of Mr E. A. Field, who was elected as first Chairman of the Authority, very good progress has been made since it assumed direct control in April of this year. Your industry has its peculiar problems and one fears you will continue to have them. Any Chairman of an Authority must have the goodwill of the producers if it is to serve you at all, and I feel that the Authority has that goodwill. I think the figures I have quoted are an indication of that.

It is recognised that the Authority has no easy task ahead of it. It enjoys the confidence of the industry, as shown by the quantity of honey sent in and by resolutions to this effect recently published.

New Zealanders like honey. The consumption per head is among the highest in the world and I know in the past you have felt you have the local market, which absorbs the majority of your production, but if they cannot absorb all the quantity you desire you send it along to the blending plant for distribution overseas. It is doubtful if the local market, as a whole, has been fully considered by past marketing organisations, since hitherto the export field had offered an attractive alternative. There are two features which might influence the present views on export:

The first is that prices overseas are no longer attractive; the other factor is the increase in population of New Zealand and the increase in the spending power of people generally.

People become more selective, particularly in food, as their real incomes increase.

The Government and the Industry

Government has guaranteed the Industry's account at the Reserve Bank in respect of trading capital, which will enable the Authority to pay advances on honey sent in and to meet working expenses. After some little heart-burnings we persuaded the Reserve Bank to make money available at quite a low rate, which will be of great assistance to the Authority and you as producers. The Authority has taken over the substantial stocks of honey and packing materials on hand at 30th November. These were actually the property of the industry under the pool arrangement which operated for many years, but the money with which they have been bought has been advanced from the Marketing Account.

The Government has been glad to assist the industry by selling the honey and material on terms which are felt to be very fair, even generous. I hope you think so.

The Government has also assisted with rental of Auckland premises. The honey industry differs from the marketing organisation of most primary industries, in that there are only two mandatory elements, the first being the levy of 1d per lb. to be applied by the Authority as it thinks best in the industry's interest, and second, the right to supervise the export trade in honey.

The latter is justified on the ground that the reputation of New Zealand honey and New Zealand produce generally requires strict oversight to see that quality, pack and condition are maintained at a high standard. The balance of the present scheme is entirely voluntary. Producers can contract with the Authority or pack and sell their produce direct through agents or to packers; or they can use all these methods.

The question of producer control of the market and overseeing the market generally—the main argument against producer controlled marketing is that there is a monopoly element in it. So far as your industry is concerned that is practically non-existent. There is a compulsory levy which I know everyone approves which has been advanced from ½d to 1d. (Voices: Not unanimous.) I think it was approved by an overwhelming majority. Some four years ago I asked you to tell me clearly—the Authority must have the say in the use of that money whether for advertising or subsidising the price.

And now the Industry's new responsibilities. The desirability of beekeepers co-operating fully with the Authority needs stressing. In the conduct of its business the Authority will ask that things be done by suppliers in a certain way, or at fixed dates, or according to certain standards. Experience in all industry marketing plans has shown that failure to study and comply with the directions of the responsible authority causes delays, losses, and waste of time and money which ultimately have to be borne by the producers. An industry working harmoniously with its marketing authority means lower costs, better contracts, less waste, better business relations, more pence per pound to producers, and a first-class article for consumers.

The industry must give the utmost consideration to consumers. It is more essential than ever to study their requirements in every way—to have honey to suit different tastes, in different packs, within the limits naturally set by costs. This is something every producer, whether a supplier or a seals purchaser, has to study.

An observance of these things, within reason, adopting a spirit and attitude of tolerance and co-operation and confidence in the men you have elected who are in the centre of things will mean, I am sure, even in these troublous times, when you cannot see far ahead, your industry will be advanced and you will have more pence in your pockets.

I am very pleased to have been with you and I wish you well in your deliberations at this Conference. I have been serving my fellow-farmers for a quarter of a century in farming organisations, and as Minister of Agriculture I am trying to serve your interests and those of farmers, who are the foundation of our economy, in the Central Council of New Zealand. I will be very happy to meet your Executive and Marketing Authority at any time I have available and will give serious consideration to their representations, and those I consider worthwhile will be as faithfully and forcefully represented to the Government as I can do.

I declare your Conference open. (Applause.)

CONFERENCE REPORT

The Annual Conference of the Association was held in Wellington on August 4th, 5th and 6th, when about 50 members were present. The President, Mr E. D. Williams, was in the chair.

The official opening was performed by the Minister of Agriculture (the Hon. K. J. Holyoake) and the Conference was then addressed by the Superintendent of the Beekeeping Industry (Mr T. S. Winter) and the Chairman of the Honey Marketing Authority (Mr E. A. Field).

The Annual Report and Balance Sheet were presented and after some discussion were adopted.

Constitution

Several proposed amendments to the Constitution were brought forward in remits, but none of these was approved by the Conference. The main suggestions had been that candidates for the Executive should be nominated by Branches one month prior to Conference and that the election should be held on a modified ward system.

A proposal that the preferential system of voting in the election of Executive members should be discarded was held over in view of the fact that the difficulties previously encountered had now been overcome. It was decided, however, that the incoming Executive should bring down a report on this matter at next Conference.

Marketing Regulations

The following remits were carried:—

“That this Conference views with concern the fact that the H.M.A.

Regulations were not drawn up in accordance with the mandate obtained from beekeepers and demands that the Regulations be amended accordingly.”—Carried.

“That Conference requests Clause 4, Part III of the H.M.A. Regulations, 1953, be amended and that the words ‘There may be paid’ be altered to read ‘There shall be paid, etc.’ as last Conference endorsed the increase in the seals levy only on the understanding that the N.B.A. was to receive up to £1000 per annum from the fund.”—Carried.

“That Conference requests the immediate alteration of Clause E, Section 17, H.M.A. Regulations, 1953 (Nominations) on the basis that a request made to the Minister by the Industry at last Conference was for a nomination qualification of 30 hives or over.”—Carried.

“That the Regulations be amended to ensure that voting qualifications for the H.M.A. be related to honey supplied to the marketing organisation and seals purchased over the two years prior to the date of the elections, instead of one year as at present.”—Carried.

A remit proposing “that in the election of the H.M.A. two members from each island be elected by voters in their respective islands” was lost on the casting vote of the chairman.

Pool Returns

Members expressed their anxiety at the prospect that returns from the Honey Pool might be insufficient to cover the cost of production, and it was pointed out that proceeds from overseas sales had suffered through competition with subsidised honey

from other exporting countries. In view of the valuable contribution to the national economy being made by the honey industry the following permit was carried:—

"That the National Beekeepers' Association and the Honey Marketing Authority again confer with the Minister with a view to obtaining financial assistance from the Government in order that the returns to suppliers to the Central Depot may be in line with the cost of production."

Seal Levy

"That should the seal levy be continued, stamped lids be made available in appropriate quantities as can be arranged by the H.M.A."—Carried.

"That all costs involved, including freight, in re-franking honey containers from ½d to 1d per lb. be borne by the H.M.A. and to be retrospective to time of increase."—Carried.

"That in view of the obvious evasion of the seals levy, the H.M.A. take immediate steps to ensure that the law applying to seals is enforced."—Carried.

"That the H.M.A. take immediate steps to have honey tax seals, over a value of £50, supplied on credit."—Carried.

Marketing

"That the Department should re-examine the method of grading manuka with a view to distinguishing between blendable and unblendable honey."—Carried.

"That Conference strongly recommends the H.M.A. to launch a solid campaign of advertising honey in general."—Carried.

"That any bulk honey sold in New Zealand by the H.M.A. be on a strictly F.O.R. or F.O.B. basis."—Carried.

"That Conference requests the H.M.A. to pursue a policy of ownership of depot premises at Auckland in lieu of a rental basis as operating at present."—Carried.

"That owing to the increased cost of production the N.B.A. Executive put forward a case to the Price

Tribunal for an increase in the price of honey."—Carried.

Miscellaneous

"That representations be made to canister makers regarding careless factory procedure which results in tins being badly rusted, apparently as a result of being splashed with soldering fluid."—Carried.

"That we request the Government to make available dollars for the purchase of up-to-date beekeeping equipment."—Carried.

"That we request the appointment of an Apiary Instructor in Hamilton at the earliest possible date, and that if necessary consideration be given to a revision of the salary scale."—Carried.

"That this Conference views with concern the rapid falling off in membership of this Association, and recommends the incoming Executive to explore every avenue of increasing membership."—Carried.

"That this Conference give the Department of Agriculture every support in its endeavours to safeguard the beekeeping industry from the detrimental effects of modern methods of weed and pasture control."—Carried.

"That this Conference draws the attention of the Department of Agriculture to the wholesale destruction of manuka by blight, leading to the withdrawal of bee population and the resultant deterioration of clover pastures."—Carried.

"That the Department of Agriculture make chemicals available to the public to check the spread of wasps in Canterbury."—Carried.

1955 Conference

"That the invitation of the West Coast Branch to hold the 1955 Conference in Greymouth be accepted."—Carried.

1956 Conference

As the result of a request from the Southland Branch, a motion was brought forward asking that a decision be made to hold the 1956 Conference in Invercargill. The Southland Centenary would be observed in that year and simultaneously the Southland Branch would

celebrate its fiftieth anniversary. As this was the oldest Branch of the Association, and as the Conference has never previously been held in Invercargill, the suggestion was well supported and the motion was carried.

Election of Officers

The following Officers were elected:—

President: Mr E. D. Williams (Te Awamutu).

Vice-President: Mr J. W. Fraser (Ryal Bush).

Executive: Messrs J. D. Lorimer (Hamilton), E. J. Kirk (Wanganui), T. E. Pearson (Darfield), and H. Cloake (Timaru).

Auditors: Messrs Moir and Campion (Levin).

General

Special mention was made by a number of speakers of the work done by Mr Winter and his staff during the past year and of their co-operation with the Association in dealing with production problems. In this connection the following resolution was carried: "That this Conference places on record its appreciation of the valuable assistance given to the honey industry by Mr Paterson in his capacity as Apiculturist and by Mr Palmer-Jones as Research Officer, and requests the Executive to inform the Director of this resolution."

A vote of thanks was extended to the retiring Executive members and to all who had assisted at the Conference, and the meeting was formally closed.

PACKAGE BEES, the modern economical and profitable answer to problems of wintering, starting new colonies, or building up weak colonies.

Packages can be supplied from late September onwards.

All packages with young Italian Queens and taken from disease-free Apiaries. Approx. build up time—10 weeks.

Place orders now for next season.

Approx. weight of four packages crated, 26 lb.

Prices of 3 lb packages:—

Up to 8 packages	.....	28/- each
Up to 20 packages	.....	27/6 each
Up to 100 packages	.....	27/- each
Over 100 packages	.....	26/- each
Queenless packages	—	Less 6/- each

Terms: 50% deposit, balance on delivery.

Other size packages to order. For further particulars write:

W. I. HAINES

BONNETTS ROAD, KAITAIA, NORTHLAND

DEATH OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY

It is with deep regret that we announce the death of Mr G. V. Fraser, General Secretary of the National Beekeepers' Association, on August 22nd. Coming so soon after the Dominion Conference, when he carried out his duties with his usual quiet efficiency, the news will be a grievous shock to the beekeepers of New Zealand.

Mr Fraser had not enjoyed the best of health over the past few years and it was apparent that the gathering effects of service in the first World War were beginning to leave their mark. Following an illness last February he had spent several weeks in hospital but he appeared to make steady progress after returning to work. Acting on medical advice, however, he had given up the practice of his profession in Foxton and the business there had been taken over by his son at the end of July. At the invitation of the General Executive he had agreed to continue the work of the National Beekeepers' Association and it was intended that in future this would be the only call upon his services.

Taking over the position of General Secretary in 1942, Mr Fraser gained the complete confidence of the Executive and Association members generally and his services were soon regarded as being almost indispensable to the industry. From the first he envisaged the honey industry as a valuable and unique unit in the Dominion economy, and he spared no effort in establishing honey as a reputable commodity and in gaining for the industry the recognition which it deserved. His understanding of the processes of honey production and the practical problems of producers was remarkable for one with no actual experience in the craft and it was this direct interest in the welfare of beekeepers which, above anything else, earned him the appreciation of members. The dignity and assurance with which he carried out his formal duties brought credit to the industry.

Over the years Mr Fraser gained a wide circle of friends through his many fine personal qualities, and among the beekeeping fraternity he was held in the highest esteem. To Executive members who served during the past twelve years and to others who knew him well his passing will bring a sense of deep personal loss.

We extend to Mrs Fraser and members of the family our sincere sympathy in their bereavement.

HONEY MARKETING AUTHORITY

Address by the Chairman (Mr E. A. Field) at the Wellington Conference

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I think I should commence my address by referring briefly to the events of the last 12 months so far as they affect the Honey Marketing Authority.

You will recall that in August and September, 1953, meetings of beekeepers were held throughout the country for the primary purpose of ascertaining whether or not they wanted organised marketing. Both the old Committee and the Executive of the National Beekeepers' Association recognised the need for a united front on this all-important question and they agreed on a joint course of action. As you are aware, the District meetings voted almost unanimously in favour of an organised marketing scheme. A combined meeting of the two bodies was then held in Wellington and agreement was reached on a number of matters which were to be included in the Regulations bringing the Honey Marketing Authority into legal existence.

The Regulations hung fire for a while and then they were hurried through without further consultation with either the old Committee or the Executive. They do not cover all our requirements nor do they include certain matters which had been agreed to at the combined meeting. Steps are now being taken to put certain amendments through, and possibly further alterations may be called for following this Conference.

The Regulations contained a provision that, pending an election of new members, the old Committee should act as the new Authority. Your Chairman attended the meetings pending his official appointment.

As it was carrying on in a temporary capacity only, the provisional Authority decided that it should take

no active steps towards setting up the new organisation and asked the Minister to agree to the Marketing Division continuing its Honey Section until the new producer members were elected. The Minister kindly acceded to our wishes. At the same time, however, the Division was in the process of being wound up and it was impracticable for it to give full attention to all details.

The provisional Authority did, however, take two important steps. Firstly, it had been advised that the Reserve Bank would charge interest at the rate of 4 per cent. on the financial accommodation required, but after making representations it was successful in having the interest rate reduced to a satisfactory figure. Secondly, the Authority was advised that it would have to meet heavy additional charges with regard to the Auckland building. I am pleased to say that a temporary measure of relief has been granted in this connection.

The election of new members duly took place and the following names were gazetted on the 8th April, 1954:—

Producer Members: Messrs R. Davidson, W. T. Herron, W. W. Nelson and myself.

National Beekeepers' Association Nominee: Mr E. D. Williams.

Government Member: Mr K. B. Longmore.

I was elected Chairman and Mr Nelson Deputy-Chairman.

At our first meeting consideration was given to the question of appointing a Manager and it was decided to advertise the position throughout the Dominion. Twenty applications were considered at the next meeting and Mr W. H. Chudley was appointed. Mr Chudley is a qualified Accountant and was the Acting-Manager of the Marketing Division, Auckland. For 12 months he also acted as Chairman of the Honey Marketing Committee and its successor, the Honey Marketing Au-

thority. He commenced duty with the Authority on the 15th June. The remaining staff were appointed on 1st July, and the Authority commenced its own organisation on that date.

The Authority's policy is to carry on the organisation for the benefit of the Industry as a whole. If the Industry is to survive, the surplus production must be exported and the Authority will continue in the meantime on the same general lines as in the past. In order to stimulate the sale of honey in the Dominion consideration is being given to an advertising scheme.

We have many problems in front of us. One of the most urgent is the packing of honey in the United Kingdom. Messrs C. & E. Morton Ltd., who have packed our honey for the British market, have advised us that they will not be able to continue this service after the 31st August. We are investigating the possibility of pre-packing export honey in New Zealand, but here we are up against the question of costs.

The quantity of honey received for the season up to the 30th June compares very favourably with previous seasons. The comparable figures are:—

1952	..	..	708 tons
1953	..	..	1,179 tons
1954	..	..	1,119 tons

Stocks are moving well. From the beginning of the financial year up to 30th June, 433 tons were sold in New Zealand and 614 tons were exported.

The contract system of acquiring honey from beekeepers operated again during the last season but the conditions were relaxed to some extent. Supplementary contracts were cut out but a certain latitude was allowed in connection with the main contract and it was provided that beekeepers could supply up to 25 per cent. in excess of the contract or 25 per cent. less than the contract and still receive the benefit of the contract premium. It is regretted that in a few cases suppliers were unable to forward the minimum quantities contracted for even after allowing for the 25 per cent. toler-

ance. The total amount of honey contracted for for the season was 796 tons, compared with 1,072 tons for the previous season.

Seals revenue for the period 1st September, 1953, to 30th June, 1954, was £14,525, compared with £6,238 for the 12 months ended 31st August, 1953. The main reason for the increase was the doubling up of the levy as from the 1st December, 1953.

The advance payment on graded honey supplied for this season was fixed at 8d per lb. pro rata. I regret that it is too early for me to indicate what the final bonus for the year will be.

It is quite apparent that the seals levy will not go far for equalising pay-outs, etc., and I think it is fairly obvious to most beekeepers that increasing the seals levy will only mean that those who are buying and packing honey will be unable to pay the costs of production in purchasing or, if packing their own crop, they will not be able to recuperate their own costs of production. The seals levy would have to be increased considerably if it were intended to bridge the gap between the costs of production and export. The price of honey since the close of the war has dropped to the point where it is quite impossible for us to export and at the same time pay the producer his costs of production. I am satisfied that unless there should be some unforeseen increase in overseas honey prices generally, beekeepers will be unable to remain in production and receive a fair return for capital invested, and a fair return for their labours. The price support programme now in operation in America resulted in our finding it impossible to compete on certain markets until honey bearing this subsidy was disposed of. The local market is well stocked at present with producer packs and, you will agree, it is not desirable for the Authority to add further to the overstocking and pushing their own sales to any great extent. I do feel, however, that producer packers should agree to a certain amount of Imperial Bee being offered in the four main centres and sold in competition

with other honeys already established.

The Authority has not yet had the opportunity to examine fully proposals for dealing with next season's supply but it intends to keep you acquainted with its plans, and would ask you in the meantime to be tolerant and to offer your suggestions and your criticisms in order that together we may build a marketing structure worthwhile for our industry.

In conclusion, I would like to express my thanks and those of the Authority to Mr Greig and Mr T. S. Winter for their continued help; to the members of the Department of Agriculture, who have given much valuable assistance during the year. I would also like to acknowledge and place on record the help and consideration given to the industry by the Minister of Agriculture, the Rt. Hon. K. J. Holyoake. His keen appreciation of our difficulties and his practical help at all times has been very much appreciated by myself and members of the Authority.

MANAGER'S REPORT

The following figures are for the 10 months, 1st September, 1953, to 30th June, 1954:—

Depot Receipts:	Tons.	Cwt.
Auckland	686	10
Christchurch	149	8
Dunedin	255	13
Greymouth	27	13
	1119	4

Contracts:	Tons.	Cwt.
North Auckland	26	15
Auckland	13	10
Hamilton	201	15
Tauranga	79	10
Hastings	2	—
Taranaki	25	—
North Island	348	10

Nelson-Greymouth	26	8
Christchurch	118	5
Oamaru	140	4
Invercargill	164	9

South Island	449	6
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TOTAL	797	16
Local Sales	431	15
Exports	613	19

Seals Revenue: £14,525.

W. H. CHUDLEY, Manager.

ITALIAN QUEENS

Reared under ideal conditions and of Highest Quality. Guaranteed free from all disease and bred from Pure Stocks which have been carefully selected for good working and non-swarming qualities.

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

	1	2	3	4	5	10	20
Untested	8/6	16/6	24/9	32/-	38/9	75/-	7/3 each
Tested	13/6	26/-	37/6	48/-	57/6	110/-	
Select Tested	16/-	30/-	Breeders 35/-.				

Also good stocks of Nuclei from 1st November at 30/- each F.O.R. or transport Nelson.

DELIVERY: Tested, as from September 20th; Untested, from October 20th (as weather permits) to April 30th.

Orders filled in rotation as received.

TERMS: Cash with order. Cheques to have exchange added.

C. A. GREIG POSTAL ADDRESS & **Brightwater, Nelson**
P.O. ORDER OFFICE

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE HORTICULTURE DIVISION

CONFERENCE ADDRESS BY MR T. S. WINTER, Superintendent, Beekeeping Industry.

I appreciate very much the opportunity given me to address this Conference and I would like to thank Mr Greig, Director of Horticulture Division, for his gesture in asking me to speak in his stead on this occasion.

At your Conference last year Mr Greig gave you a very comprehensive survey of the set-up and overall activities of the Department in giving service to the beekeeping industry.

Today the Minister of Agriculture, in opening this Conference, gave you information regarding the status of the beekeeping industry in New Zealand and also touched on the work of the Department during the past year.

I intend therefore to range briefly over a fairly wide field covering the affairs of the industry and to quote certain figures regarding the disease situation, production and marketing—leading up to points I wish to make which are of importance to you.

Inspection of Apiaries: It has been stated that new methods for dealing with bee diseases introduced in 1951 are now showing excellent results in the control and eradication of foulbrood, which is reduced to less than 1 per cent. of the hives inspected last season in some of the main honey producing districts, and appreciably reduced in other areas. District reports show a downward trend since 1951, as follows:—

Auckland	.. ..	1951/52	3.15%	Last season	1.2%
Hamilton	.. ..	"	3.35%	" "	.8%
Tauranga	.. ..	"	3.58%	" "	2%
Palmerston North	.. ..	"	5.46%	" "	1.6%
Hawera	.. ..	"	.89%	" "	.49%
Hastings	.. ..	"	4.6%	" "	3%
Christchurch	.. ..	"	3.38%	" "	1.8%
Oamaru	.. ..	"	3.42%	" "	1.8%
Invercargill	.. ..	"	3.7%	" "	1.7%

No reports are to hand this year from Greymouth.

The position shown here is very pleasing, but unfortunately the rapid improvement in the foulbrood situation appears to have given some beekeepers a false feeling of security, including some Part-time Inspectors, who have done good work but who now show some reluctance to continue with the work.

I am somewhat perturbed about this, as now is definitely not the time to ease up on the job. A strong follow-through on present lines for at least another two seasons is essential. We could then take another look at the overall situation and see whether we should change our present policy in any way.

Quite frankly, I would say that if producers continue to lose interest in this work it would be physically impossible for Apiary Instructors to cover the ground effectively each year, in which case foulbrood would again become the problem it was a few years ago.

I would therefore strongly urge all Branches of the National Association to continue to co-operate with the local Apiary Instructor in this matter and to see that sufficient competent beekeepers offer themselves for the work each season.

Another aspect regarding the inspection of apiaries (which has been mentioned in your Journal) is the difficulty experienced by Apiary Instructors in establishing the ownership of some apiaries.

This difficulty would be overcome if every producer used a one-inch stencil to place his name on the outside of one hive in each of his out-apiaries.

Any compulsory system, however, whereby beekeepers would use a distinguishing mark allotted to them would involve the Department in a lot of extra work, which should be avoided if possible.

This matter will be taken up with your Executive to see whether any voluntary arrangement with beekeepers to mark their out-apiaries in some way would be likely to succeed.

In a total of 12,530 registered apiaries there are approximately 5300 out-apiaries.

Another matter which has a bearing on disease control is
Efficiency in Apiary Management

I would like to give a warning here. It is not my intention to put the spotlight on any individual producer but to point out that there is a tendency for some producers to take on far more colonies and apiaries than they can manage efficiently with available staff. In such cases running costs are kept down by making comparatively few visits to each apiary—and hoping for the best.

In the aggregate large crops may be produced in that way, but where capable staff is not engaged in sufficient numbers the effects to a large extent would be:

- (a) Very low average production per hive.
- (b) To occupy large areas of territory capable of producing much more honey each year.
- (c) A high percentage of undesirable swarming, resulting in trouble to neighbouring producers and also to the Department in extra work involved in taking care of stray swarms and keeping down the incidence of foulbrood. Fortunately there is little of this at present, but where it occurs it is not in the best interests of the industry as a whole.

ACARINE DISEASE

As many of you know, Acarine disease is caused by a mite which enters the breathing tubes of the bee, punctures the walls of the tubes and lives on the juices of the bee.

Infected bees become weakened and frequently colonies and whole apiaries succumb to the disease.

Acarine is the most serious of all bee diseases and is widespread in Britain and on the Continent. Fortunately this disease does not occur in New Zealand, but the seriousness of the position has been shown by a recent report that acarine disease has reached the Argentine.

Our concern is to see that every precaution is taken to prevent it reaching here and if it does to deal drastically with it.

We have a fairly watertight set-up to ensure that only disease-free bees are allowed into the country and only from countries where acarine disease is not known to exist, but we have no power at present to deal as effectively as we would like with any apiary where it is found following the introduction or illegal entry of bees.

We may need something along the lines of the recently gazetted Plant Diseases Regulations, 1954, which give the Department power to eradicate any new disease introduced into the country before it becomes properly established, and if necessary to destroy crop and plants over a wide area in order to achieve this.

There is also power to declare an infected area, and to restrict the movement of any likely carriers of the disease, etc.

With regard to acarine disease, the Department would be prepared to sponsor suitable regulations that would give power to set up a suitable organisation and have plans ready to swing into action immediately if and when acarine disease is discovered here.

Nothing would be done, however, without first-hand information on control measures and treatment, which can only be obtained at Rothamsted Experimental Station in Britain, and not without full consultation with and approval of your Executive.

HONEY MARKETING CONDITIONS

As you know, the Horticulture Division has no jurisdiction in the marketing of honey, but we are often called in by merchants and retailers to advise on the condition of honey held in store for long periods, and what can be done with it, etc.

We do see many expensive mistakes being made by producers, merchants and retailers alike in handling this commodity.

I feel therefore that it would be appropriate at this time for me to give you a picture of affairs as I see them and to make suggestions for an improvement in overall marketing conditions.

First let us take a look at production figures and marketing of honey overseas by countries who compete with us on the export market and see how we can improve our position generally.

AUSTRALIA

The main honey producing States are New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia.

According to a report by P. D. Mantle, in "Food Industries Weekly":

The number of semi-commercial and commercial beekeepers in Australia in 1953 was about 7000, operating a total of 305,000 productive colonies of bees.

In 1952-53 Australia exported in round figures 7400 tons of honey.

The United Kingdom was the main customer, taking 6750 odd tons. Western Zone of Germany took 300 odd tons, and the balance went to a variety of overseas markets.

The amount of honey consumed in Australia per head of population has been estimated at something like 1.3lb., including the honey used in confectionery and for other manufacturing purposes.

Australian honey is sold for less than New Zealand honey on the United Kingdom market. She can do this—firstly, because her average production per colony is greater than New Zealand, and secondly, because the overall quality of their honey is different from the New Zealand product.

These facts, however, do not help us any, but they do have a bearing on our welfare.

U.S.A.

According to the annual report of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, honey production in U.S.A. in 1953 totalled in round figures 100,000 tons, 18 per cent. less than the previous year, and the smallest crop since 1948.

It is of interest to note that the 1953 crop was produced from 5,533,000 colonies of bees, and that the average production of honey per hive that year was 40.5lb.

The comparatively short crop in 1953 resulted in cancellation of the export subsidy programme in mid-year, when 11,160 tons had already been approved for export.

An amount of 11,160 tons of U.S. price-supported honey—plus 7400 tons of low-priced Australian honey exported to the United Kingdom that year—had its effects on the sale of New Zealand honey overseas.

It has been announced that price support for U.S. surplus export honey will be continued during the 1954 marketing season. The rate of payment this year will be 3.75 cents per lb. (3.24d), as compared with 4 cents per lb. last year.

High authorities tell us that as living standards improve in many overseas countries the demand for our foodstuffs will increase by leaps and bounds. That may be, but in the meantime we have to carry on and live within our own economy.

The overseas markets may be able to take increasing amounts of honey annually, at a price, but the present trend calls for caution and skill in the matter of our export honey and **more attention to building up consumption at home.**

To maintain stability within the industry it is sound business to draw off to export all honey that is surplus to local requirements, but I do suggest that more could be done to increase consumption locally. You must watch, however, that in the process you do not drag down prices to uneconomic levels by over-supply to merchants and to retailers who may be forced to drop prices to clear old stocks.

Unfortunately there is a tendency for some producer packers to dispose of their entire crop each year for delivery in one lot. In these circumstances honey is often held for long periods under poor storage conditions resulting in deterioration and losses that could be avoided.

Spread delivery would give the producer better control over the condition of his product and would provide a more steady flow of packed honey on to the market, and tend to keep prices more stable.

Grain in Honey

Enquiries are received each year for information regarding coarse grained honey on the market, the reason for this and what can be done with it, etc.

Any coarse grained honey is a drag on the local market and retards sales generally over all packs. This is an important matter and a simple problem that could be overcome by all producer packers.

Scum

I also receive enquiries from the Trade regarding scum and wax particles on the surface of some packages returned by customers. It is obvious that some packers do not give sufficient attention to their honey, and that they allow the last of the tank to go through without regard to its condition.

It is bad practice and may turn many good customers away from honey.

Storage of Honey

Some merchants and many retailers give little attention to correct storage of honey in stock and even when on display. I do think that information and advice to wholesalers and to retailers on this subject is necessary to prevent losses that occur frequently under present

conditions. This could be done by leaflet when sales are made and when accounts are rendered, or by information pasted on each delivery case.

Fermentation in Honey

It is surprising the quantity of honey lost to the trade each year because of fermentation. Care in handling and more orderly marketing along the lines I have suggested would largely take care of this problem.

It would be good long-term policy for producers to follow a system of regular enquiry regarding the condition of stocks held by the Trade and to replace any of their honey that has deteriorated below the usual standard. A high standard of cleanliness, freshness and condition brings back customers more regularly.

I feel that by judicious advertising and by telling the public generally the many ways honey can be used, also by giving careful attention to other matters I have mentioned, you may find the local market will take the bulk of your production in the next decade.

A steady increase in our population will provide further scope for your endeavours in that direction as the years go by.

Honey Production in New Zealand Last Season

Overall production of honey from commercial and domestic apiaries for the year ended 31st March, 1954, was estimated at 6447 tons.

A break up of that total by districts, also North and South Island production, is of interest and may be helpful to producer packers and others in their marketing arrangements.

Commercial Group, 30 hives and over—

Auckland, including North Auckland	.. ..	700 tons
Hamilton	.. ..	1152 "
Tauranga	.. ..	455 "
Hastings	.. ..	460 "
Hawera	.. ..	325 "
Palmerston North	.. ..	448 "
West Coast-Nelson	.. ..	190 "
Christchurch	.. ..	875 "
Oamaru	.. ..	680 "
Invercargill	.. ..	430 "
Total	.. ..	5715 "

To which is added 732 tons from apiaries under 30 hives.

North Island production last season	.. ..	4119 tons
South Island production last season	.. ..	2328 "

Production and sales this year should be a good guide to local market possibilities, and a guide to the draw-off to export required to stabilise conditions here.

N.B.A.

A dangerous trend in recent years of comparative prosperity in the beekeeping industry is the lack of interest shown by many producers in the affairs of the industry.

It is not realised, I am sure, by many beekeepers the importance of maintaining a strong organisation to represent the industry in all matters requiring an approach to the Government.

I can say as a Departmental officer partly responsible for making recommendations to the Department for presentation to and consideration of the Government in matters of law relating to beekeeping and work to foster and protect the industry that without the backing of a representative body such as yours, we would not get very far.

To get the best out of your occupation and chosen way of life, and for further progress, I would say that—at this critical period in your affairs—a special effort now by Branches to stir up greater interest in the work of the N.B.A. and to build up your strength as far as possible appears to be essential. Make this a real working Conference of fair comment and discussion of your problems, and when decisions are taken get in behind your Executive and assist them to implement your wishes as far as possible.

BEEKEEPING INSTRUCTION COURSE

Arrangements have now been completed by the Department for a central two-day instruction course for beekeepers to be held in the Bay Hall, Timaru, on Wednesday and Thursday, 15th and 16th September next, beginning at 9.30 a.m. each day.

The South Canterbury Branch of the National Beekeepers' Association have arranged for a meeting of producers to be held on the evening of Thursday, 16th, and for a field day to be held at the home apiary of Walter Watson & Co., Greshams Road, Geraldine, on Friday, 17th September.

The following subjects will be dealt with by Departmental officers, and additional items will be given at the field day by leading honey producers:—

Installation of cool rooms.

Honey house construction.

Removal of excess moisture in honey.

Preparation of honey by producers, grading and use thereafter.

Standard methods of apiary management.

Effect of DDT phosphate on honey bees.

Selection of breeding strains of bees.

Practical working demonstration of artificial insemination of queen bees.

Use of package bees in the South Island.

Comb honey production.

Arrangements have been made for morning and afternoon tea to be served each day at the Bay Tea Rooms. Beekeepers are urgently requested to notify the Apiary Instructor, Department of Agriculture, Oamaru, who is in charge of local arrangements, how many in his family will attend, including himself, for the information of the caterers. (The price for teas will be 1/9 per serving.)

All beekeepers are cordially invited to attend.

NICHOLAS' HIGH GRADE COMB FOUNDATION

IS MANUFACTURED FROM THE FINEST OF PURE BEESWAX.

YOUR OWN WAX CONVERTED OR EXCHANGED.

GOOD STOCKS AVAILABLE FOR IMMEDIATE DELIVERY.

MY FOUNDATION IS ALSO AVAILABLE AT CONVERSION

RATES FROM MR. I. G. W. MUNCASTER, QUEEN'S ROAD,

PANMURE. WAX TO MR. MUNCASTER SHOULD BE SENT

TO THE ELLERSLIE STATION.

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T. W. R. NICHOLAS

P.O. BOX 28 ::: PHONE 2368 ::: HAWERA

A BALLAD

I went to the Conference at Wellington,
The first one I'd ever been to.
If I didn't learn much else
I certainly learnt how to argue.

We got off the train in the morning
Just at the breaking of day,
As the southerners came off the ferry
Girding their loins for the fray.

It was jolly when we reached the Conference
With smiles and handshakes all round,
Though the whispering groups in the corners
Had a rather ominous sound.

When the meeting was called to order
By Mr Williams the President-elect,
The silence that fell was amazing
But it was hardly a lasting effect.

We were told that our welfare was endangered,
That we must up and stern measures take,
That this was the crucial moment
And vital decisions we must make.

It sounded so serious and desperate
That I broke down and burst into tears.
Someone said, "Don't despair, old man,
They've been saying that for years."

We battled all day with our problems,
With remits and amendments galore,
We bashed the H.M.A. and the Government,
We had points of order by the score.

We had constitution with our beer before dinner,
We had seals levy with our soup,
Honey Marketing Regulations with the entree,
Over the sweets we formed a pressure group.

We reckoned we deserved a subsidy
For the good that our honey bees do.
We elected our executive officers,
All good men and true.

As I sit in the train going homewards,
Listening to the rails' monotonous roar,
I'm not sure if I've been to the Conference
Or the blooming Korean War.

PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

The strange spectacle of a quantity of honey boiling vigorously at a temperature of about 130deg. F. was shown to beekeepers at an evening meeting held in Wellington during Conference week. A few seconds of this treatment was sufficient to drive off all excess moisture and the honey emerged from the ordeal without the slightest injury, either to colour or flavour.

The demonstration featured equipment designed by Apiculturist C. R. Paterson and Research Officer T. Palmer-Jones for treating honey of low specific gravity. In the course of their work they had investigated several different principles and had eventually dropped on the solution—*heating the honey under a vacuum.*

During his address Mr Paterson described the experiments and the resulting piece of equipment, which is fairly simple, compact, not too expensive for a commercial beekeeper, will handle two and a half tons per day, and is amazingly effective. A working model made with glass components was used by Mr Paterson to show the entire process as it goes on, and the surplus moisture was actually condensed and run off into a separate container. Hey presto!

Full details of the process are to be published shortly for the benefit of the honey industry.

The second part of the programme was in the hands of Mr T. Palmer-Jones, who described trials which had been carried out to discover the effect of DDT super on honeybees. The trials were not only thorough in conception but also reassuring in their conclusions. DDT super, which is used extensively in the control of grass grub and subterranean caterpillar, is in itself lethal to bees, but in practice its effects were hardly noticeable. The danger persists only for a few days after its application to clover flowers and during that time the substance is so repellent to bees that little harm appears to result. In fact it is possible that DDT may assist the industry through its beneficial effect on pastures.

Producers who were present at the meeting were enthusiastic in acknowledging the work being done at present for the beekeeping industry. The equipment shown during the evening was quoted as a fine example of the achievements of the apiculture staff under the direction of Mr T. S. Winter, achievements which had placed New Zealand among the leading countries in the beekeeping world.

On the motion of Mr E. A. Field, supported by a number of speakers, the following resolution was carried by acclamation: "That this meeting congratulates Mr Paterson and Mr Palmer-Jones on the success of their efforts towards improved methods of honey production and expresses its keen appreciation of the work being done by the Department of Agriculture in the interests of the beekeeping industry."

Mr E. D. Williams was in the chair.

"WET" HONEY

A remit on the order paper at Wellington recommended that the Horticulture Division should organise a service whereby producers could have samples of honey tested for moisture content quickly and at low cost. When the matter came up for discussion Mr Palmer-Jones was asked for his views and he gave a brief explanation of the position.

Either a hydrometer or a refractometer may be used to test the specific gravity of honey. The Chataway is the only hydrometer considered reliable and even this type is not too satisfactory with viscous honeys. The instrument incorporates a thermometer so that temperature corrections can be made easily, and about one pound of honey is required to make the test. Unfortunately it is somewhat expensive—£10 or more—and is obtainable only in Canada or the U.S.A.

The refractometer will test any type of honey quickly and accurately, is easy to operate, and will last a lifetime, but even the simplest model costs about £60. Only a drop

of honey is required to make the test.

There is one serious difficulty in testing samples of honey for producers—that of securing a true sample. Honey in a tank, or in any container, is apt to settle in layers of different density, so there could be no guarantee to a producer that a sample reading would be correct for the honey represented. For this reason it was considered that the testing service suggested would be of limited value.

The remit was debated in the light of Mr Palmer-Jones' explanation and was lost on the voices.

CONFERENCE SIDELIGHTS

Practically all districts from Northland to Southland were represented at the Conference. Nobody was under any illusions about the marketing situation, but with over six thousand tons of honey in their pockets there was some reason for producers to feel more cheerful than a year ago. A note of harmony could be detected throughout the proceedings and this provided at least one hopeful portent for the future.

* * *

Mr T. F. Penrose (discussing the marketing policy of individual producers): They sell what they can and can what they can't—in sixties.

* * *

Mr T. H. Pearson (having a friendly argument with the Chairman): You said "Mr Pearson" and I got up. I thought the chap from Darfield was Tom Pearson!

* * *

Any beekeepers who desire to catch a few elephants (or surmount any other difficulties) will be interested in a method described at Conference by Mr George Gordon. The materials required are a blackboard and chalk, telescope, a pair of tweezers and an empty jam tin. Set up the blackboard at a convenient place in the jungle and write thereon the equation: $1 + 1 = 3$. Soon a number of elephants will gather round to consider the veracity of

this proposition. At this stage the operator approaches to a position where he can view the elephants through the wrong end of the telescope and they can then be picked up with the tweezers and dropped one by one into the jam tin.

* * *

Eager Delegate: Mr Chairman, may I ask the last speaker a question?

Chairman (or rather, Des Williams): Well—er—is it a sensible question?

* * *

Mr Wallace Nelson (concerned at the prospect of holding the next Conference in Greymouth): Return tickets usually expire on a stipulated date and the West Coast hospitality is on such a scale that one is apt to lose consciousness of time!

* * *

The tenacity with which the spirit clings to the body was well demonstrated at Lyttelton the morning after Conference, when every single passenger walked off the boat, or was carried off, in an amimate condition. No doubt the new "Maori" is a fine ship but she has no more respect for the feelings of travellers than her predecessor of the same name. We have noticed that a rough passage is sometimes attributed to the behaviour of the ocean and sometimes to that of the ship; actually in all cases it is the result of a wicked conspiracy between the two.

ETERNAL VIGILANCE

Mr W. B. Bray: Mr Chairman, you didn't call for the noes on that motion.

Chairman: Yes, I did.

Mr Bray: No, you didn't, and I've been denied the opportunity of casting my vote.

Chairman: Those against the motion, please say so.

Mr Bray: No.

Chairman: The ayes have it.

A DINNER

The occasion was a formal Roman dinner. There were four slaves waiting upon the 16 guests. The principal dish was a noble spit-roasted pig, and among the good things to eat and drink were honey-mead, oysters with honey-vinegar, and honey-in-the-comb. Dressed in flowing togas and conversing in the Roman tongue, the gathering was entertained in true Roman style and disported itself in Roman games.

This interesting event took place on the seventh day of August, MCMLIV Anno Domino, in the city of Dunedin. It was arranged by the Latin Honours students at the Otago University and the guest of honour was Professor H. Mattingly, a distinguished scholar from overseas. Professor Mattingly has been spending the past year at the University as visiting Professor in Classics and will shortly be returning to England.

The inquiry for some honeymead for the occasion aroused the interest of Otago and Southland beekeepers and no stone was left unturned until the table was supplied with a choice array of honey and its products. It was a neat example of the intrinsic value of honey, a foodstuff in a class apart, the same today as it was two thousand years ago.

Wasps' 10-foot Nest

A party of Ruapekapeka residents who recently attacked a wasps' nest near the Ruapekapeka-Kawakawa road found themselves with a two-day job. The visible portion of the nest measured three feet across and about three feet deep, and the party set to work in the approved fashion by spraying the nest with Diesel oil from a flame-thrower and then scorching the whole area with a brushwood fire. Then they found that the nest ran deeply underground. The next day the party came back with two flame-throwers, more Diesel oil and more brushwood. They finally uncovered and destroyed the entire nest. Ten feet deep and 10 feet across the bottom, it tapered up to a width of five feet at the top.

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1954-55

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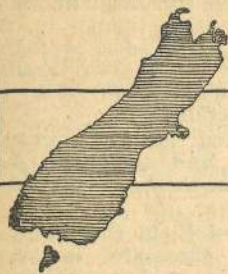
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BRANCH NOTES



FAR NORTH

The Far North honey crop was good this season after a disappointing spring which interfered with the manuka crop, said the annual report of the Far North Branch.

Membership was low compared with that in the heyday of beekeeping but it seemed that the general trend was fewer beekeepers and more bees, and that this was applicable to this district. The Branch membership of 12 was now consolidating, and it was hoped that the loss of interest over the past few years will cease in the new year.

Inspections were made of hives during the year and beekeepers were pleased to learn that no disease (bacillus larvae) was found. It was stressed that the efforts to keep the district clean should not be relaxed.

This could only be done by all beekeepers co-operating with the Department, and by taking every precaution, particularly in dealing with honey from sources not known to be disease-free.

Several hives were destroyed in buildings by members during the year. This nuisance has increased with the loss of interest by beekeepers who, in many cases, have more or less abandoned their hives.

With the formation of the Honey Marketing Authority members were looking forward hopefully to more stable conditions for future marketing.

The year 1954 had a particular significance for the Branch as it was 10 years ago on December 6, 1944 that a band of enthusiasts met in the library room to consider the formation of a branch of the N.B.A. Those

present were Messrs E. N. Matthews, A. M. Sheffield, R. L. Davies, A. C. W. Bird, Rev. J. Graham, T. F. Puckey and W. I. Haines.

The Branch had held four meetings during the past year, two of which were addressed by the apinary instructors, Messrs D. Roberts and E. Smellie, who gave useful advice on many aspects of beekeeping.

Officers elected for the year are: President, W. G. Macpherson; vice-presidents, W. T. Watts, F. C. Brent, R. L. Davies; secretary-treasurer, W. I. Haines; committee, C. Rope, W. T. Watts, R. L. Davies, J. W. Thornton, G. A. Johnston, D. I. Michie. Delegate, W. I. Haines.

GORE

A well-known member of the Gore Branch, Mr C. J. Kellett, left New Zealand at the end of June with Mrs Kellett and their three children and expects to be in England for a year or possibly longer. Mr Kellett teaches engineering at the Gore High School and he intends to gain experience in this subject while overseas. During his absence his bees are being cared for by Mr S. Bryant, of Riversdale.

Another Branch member, Mr G. Toogood, has recently sold his business of 400 hives and left New Zealand to live in Canada. His outfit has been purchased by Mr Tom Young, who worked previously with Mr W. T. Herron. We wish Mr Young every success in his venture in commercial beekeeping.

—F. J. Glass.

OTAGO

Reference was made at the Dunedin Convention to the death on May 24 of Mr J. McLeod, of the Alliance Bee Supplies Company, and members expressed regret at the passing of one who had earned the respect and esteem of all in the honey industry. Mr McLeod was well known in beekeeping circles and in his work, first as Storeman and later as Manager at the "Alliance" he won many friends among the honey producers of Otago and Southland. His keen interest in the welfare of beekeepers and his generous and helpful manner were always greatly appreciated and will long be remembered by all with whom he was associated.

—J. McFadzien.

SOUTHLAND

Annual Report

Membership has been well maintained during the year, a comparison of our membership list with the list of registered beekeepers in the branch area showing that almost all the commercial producers and the majority of the active smaller producers are members. It is to be hoped that now marketing is in the hands of a producer-controlled board, branch meetings will be less concerned with marketing problems, and consequently of more interest to beekeepers generally.

The year closed with a satisfactory credit balance. Three meetings were held during the year, two of which were combined with the Gore branch, as was the field day.

The first of these was held in Gore and provided an excellent opportunity for a full discussion on remits to Conference. At this meeting Mr J. W. Fraser was nominated for the General Executive, and it is pleasing to record that his candidature was successful. The report on Conference was given to a combined meeting held in Invercargill, and was a very successful function, brightened by the presence of several ladies at supper. Films were shown by courtesy of Mr Line and his departmental colleague, Mr Busch. The last meet-

ing was held in the Department of Agriculture rooms, thanks to Mr Line. This resulted in a saving to the branch, all the greater because the U.F.S. rentals have been increased considerably.

The combined meetings proved worth while, and members may wish to continue them in the coming year.

The combined Field Day, held at Winton, was successful in every way. This was to have been recorded by the N.B.S. for subsequent broadcasting, but owing to the Queen's visit, this could not be arranged. The broadcasting authorities have expressed their interest in attending next year's function, which is to be held in the Gore branch area.

The branch was represented at the Dunedin Convention, and members contributed honey to the display. This honey was donated to the Veterans' Home at Montecillo, and letters of appreciation were received from the Matron and the Council which administers the home.

A gift of honey, to which members of this branch contributed, was also made to the Licensing Trust for the use of Her Majesty the Queen during her stay in Invercargill. Honey contributed surplus to the Trust's requirements was presented to the Children's Health Camp at Omaui. A letter of appreciation was received from the Secretary of the Health Camp Committee. Members may consider it would be a worth while gesture to make an annual gift of honey to the Health Camp from the branch.

During the year the industry has received a good deal of publicity, and the local press has been generous in its allocation of space on several occasions. There can be little doubt that this materially assisted the sale of last year's bumper crop.

In 1956, the year in which Southland will be celebrating its centenary, will occur the 50th anniversary of the founding of this branch, the first in N.Z. Some thought should be given as to how the occasion may best be marked. It would perhaps be a suitable time to invite the N.B.A.

to hold Conference in Invercargill.

The outstanding feature of the year (apart from the difficulty many of us experienced in securing a good crop) has been the change from Government to producer control of organised marketing. While many vexatious delays were experienced in giving effect to the industry's wishes, a new Board has at last been elected, and we can expect their decisions on the many problems confronting the industry at an early date. Two of the successful candidates in the election for producer representatives, Messrs Herron and Davidson, addressed producers at the Field Day at Winton.

Close contact has been kept with the Gore branch—apart from combined meetings, this branch has had representatives welcomed to their meetings, and we in turn will always extend a welcome to Gore members.

The thanks of the branch are due to the Apiary Instructor, Mr Line, who has been very willing to assist us in every way.

C. M. CUNNINGHAM,
President.

DUNEDIN CONVENTION

A good representation of Otago and Southland beekeepers was present at the Annual Convention held in Dunedin on June 8th. The afternoon meeting was addressed by Mr J. W. Fraser, of the Dominion Executive, and Messrs W. T. Herron and R. Davidson, of the Honey Marketing Authority, and there was a lengthy discussion on current matters, particularly the marketing situation. With reference to the H.M.A. election the following resolution was carried: "That this meeting views with concern the failure of the Returning Officer to make his intention clear in the matter of how a voter was to cast his votes in the recent election of producer representatives to the H.M.A. and requests the Executive to take steps to ensure that in future elections the directions to voters are clear and explicit. Further, that this meeting is of the opinion that the ruling of the Re-

turning Officer as regards the casting of votes is contrary to the intention as expressed in the directions to voters, and could have resulted, and perhaps has resulted, in the Authority being elected on a false basis; and requests the Executive to so inform the Minister."

Having spoken its mind on this very sore point the meeting then turned its attention to the future and passed a second resolution: "That this Convention expresses its confidence in the new H.M.A. and in the Secretary-Manager and extends to them its support and goodwill in their work." Mr S. Spence was in the chair.

Mr A. J. Shaw presided at the evening session when beekeeping topics were to the fore. The subjects for discussion were "Honeyhouse Construction and Equipment" and "The Hot Room," and the speakers were Messrs S. Line (Apiary Instructor) and J. McFadzien. An enjoyable social hour with supper concluded the programme.

Honey was again prominent at the Dunedin Winter Show and the displays produced some favourable comment. Entries in the competitive classes were the best for some years, and the awards were well distributed throughout the district.

WINTER PROBLEM

Overheard at the Dunedin Convention (June 8):—

Dan Wells (Ophir): Skating? Hang it all, no; we haven't had any frost yet. The weather is so mild the bees are out flying nearly every day. Tell me, what about the stores when there is so much activity in the winter time?

Jim Horn (Kyeburn): Well, it's just the same as taking the car out for a run. It's a lot easier on the petrol tank when you keep it in the garage.

Note: On June 18 a snowfall covered Otago and Southland to a depth of up to ten inches, so Dan and Jim would be duly relieved. No doubt the frosts which followed keep the throttles pretty well closed for the remainder of the winter.



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NOTES FOR BEGINNERS

By "SKEP"

A year has passed since I took over the duties of "Skep." During that time I have endeavoured to present a general picture of seasonal work as it became due for attention. I hope that I have been able to help you in your work with the bees, and that you have derived added enjoyment from your hobby through the better organisation of your beekeeping activities.

It will be realised that from Far South to Far North the timing of the work will vary considerably, but, by careful observation, you will soon be able to apply the advice given, at the right time for your district.

Repetition

The management of hives is, in a general way, the same year by year.

This being so, a certain amount of repetition is inevitable, and indeed necessary in notes of this kind. New readers, eager for knowledge, join the ranks, and those with longer experience meet problems new to them.

The brilliant few may be able to read once, and master the subject, but the average mortal learns more slowly, though none the less effectively in the end.

The thorough assimilation of knowledge in beekeeping usually requires much repetition in the study of theory, together with practical application over a number of seasons.

Keen observation and records of successes and failures add greatly to your interest, and give you a check on your progress.

It is hard to maintain enthusiasm over any project unless you can enjoy a measure of success. I trust that my reminders of work due for attention will assist you to find this satisfaction, whether bees are your work or your hobby.

Conference

The Conference of the National Beekeepers' Association will be his-

tory by the time you receive this issue of the "N.Z. Beekeeper." Grave problems in marketing procedure, which affect every beekeeper in our country, will be discussed, and, we trust, in some measure solved. Whilst this Conference is of the utmost importance to the beekeeping industry, it is only mentioned here as marking the end of the beekeeper's relaxation period.

Plan Your Work

Plan your work, then work your plan, is an excellent motto for almost any undertaking. It is a "must" as far as beekeeping is concerned.

Matters requiring your immediate attention are:—

How many hives do you propose to work this season?

Have you sufficient covers and floor-boards for this number?

Allowing at least four supers fitted with combs, or frames fitted with comb-foundation per hive, have you enough to cope with your expected honey crop?

If some additional equipment is needed, now is the time to prepare it.

Perhaps you wish to make it up yourself. If so, make only standard sized hives and frames.

This information, together with a wealth of other beekeeping instruction is readily available from the Department of Agriculture in the form of the booklet "Beekeeping in New Zealand," by T. S. Winter. Price 2/6.

This is a good time to carry out any painting or hive repairs which may be necessary.

A queen is good for two seasons only in a producing hive. If you wish to buy queens for spring introduction, lose no time in placing your order. Likewise, the ordering of nuclei or package bees should be attended to immediately. Make use of your local Apiary Instructor. He can advise you on your particular

needs and problems, and can give you addresses of reputable queen-breeders.

The extractor that wobbled last year, the cappings melter or steam knife that sprung a leak, or any other job that you intended to have done before next season—do it now.

A Look at the Bees

It is a grand moment when, on a fine day in early September, you go out to your apiary to see how the bees have wintered.

After a long spell your smoker may be rather difficult to get going, but once started, it makes you sniff the air with expectancy, and you think to yourself, "It's going to be a grand season for bees this year."

Note These Things

Is the queen alive and laying normally?

Is the brood healthy?

Has the hive sufficient stored honey to last at least a month?

Is the floor-board clean and clear of obstruction at the entrance?

A hive headed by a good queen should have brood on about three frames or more at this inspection. It should be even in pattern. Hives showing a very scattered brood pattern usually have an old or inferior queen. These should be marked down for requeening at the earliest possible moment.

Drone breeders or queenless hives are best united to a normal hive with a double thickness of newspaper between.

Foul brood is still the worst beekeeping pest, and no amount of precaution is too great to keep it from spreading through your apiary if it exists at all.

Healthy sealed brood has a raised capping showing a certain amount of bloom. Diseased brood is usually sunken and dark in colour. When pierced with a match-stick, the cell will be found to contain scale, or a sticky solution which will rope out some distance when the stick is withdrawn.

Report any outbreak to your Apiary Instructor, and act on his advice.

Usually killing the bees, and burning all the contents of the hive in a prepared hole, is the safest procedure. Supers may be saved if thoroughly scorched inside with a blow-lamp.

Fundamentals

Amongst the maze of information you may gather about beekeeping, never allow the three fundamentals to become blurred. They are: 1st, ample stores; 2nd, a young, vigorous queen of good strain; 3rd, freedom from disease.

In this area, a purely clover district, I would consider ample stores at the beginning of September to be not less than 40lbs.

October Work

Keep at least three full combs of honey ahead of your hive's immediate requirements. Again check your queens, as some, which have shown a good brood pattern at the very start of the season may be flagging at this stage. Mark down such for removal, or remove and requeen if your ordered queens have come to hand.

This is a good month for rearing queens. Perhaps you have the knowledge or the inclination to try yourself out in this most interesting work. If so, the earlier you commence, providing your district is suitable, the better. Much time must elapse from the time the cell is grafted until the queen hatches, is mated, lays and the brood from her eggs matures.

Apiary Instructors and Part-time Apiary Inspectors

Always regard the Apiary Instructor or part-time man as your friend. He is appointed primarily to control and, as far as possible, eradicate disease, but he also visits you to assist you with your beekeeping generally.

To be fully effective, inspection of hives should be made in the spring and early summer.

The areas allotted to permanent Apiary Instructors are so large as to make adequate coverage impossible in the short time available, especially where unsettled weather interferes with inspection work. To

enable better coverage to be made, a system known as the Part-time Apiary Inspection Scheme has been operated for a number of years. Under this plan, experienced beekeepers are appointed for a short period each season. Each is allotted an area, usually adjacent to his own district. He is expected to visit all apiaries in that area as far as his time allows. Reports are made to the permanent officer, and any measures necessary to deal with disease are taken by him.

You may receive a visit from one or other of these men during October-November. Make him welcome and avail yourself of the opportunity to discuss with him any beekeeping matter with which you are having difficulty. He does not call to harass you, but rather to help you make a success of your beekeeping.

Registration of Apiaries

Beekeepers are required by law to register their apiaries, whether large or small, with the Department of Agriculture. A registration card will be sent to you on application. No charge is made.

This is not just an irksome regulation. It is very necessary in order that officers may readily locate your

apiary, and thus render you and your fellow-beekeepers a service.

Permits for Moving Bees

Before bees can be moved from one property to another, a permit must be obtained from your local Apiary Instructor. At first glance this may seem just an annoying piece of red-tape, but, on closer examination, it will be seen that the Apiary Register would soon become of little value if some record were not kept of bees which, for various reasons, are moved about from time to time.

In most cases the hives are inspected for disease before the permit to move is issued, thus preventing diseased hives from being moved into clean areas. The best way to appreciate this requirement is to imagine what would happen if a beekeeper, quite unknown to you, were to move a group of infected hives to a position very near to your own clean apiary.

In spite of all our efforts, foul brood still persists, but if every beekeeper will co-operate in keeping the rules, and never relax his vigilance, the losses from it can be kept to the barest minimum.

"Skep" wishes you happy beekeeping during the coming season.

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BROOD COMBS

By J. McFadzien

Good combs are essential in the brood chamber in order to ensure a high percentage of worker bees and a compact brood nest which makes for a rapid build-up prior to the main honey flow. Combs should be straight, attached to the frame on all four sides, and almost entirely of worker cells. When a comb has large numbers of drone cells it is usually discarded for obvious reasons, but what is just as bad or even worse is the comb which is unattractive to the queen. The beekeeper can usually recognise such a comb, perhaps it has shallow cells on one side, or a dry, hungry appearance from having been avoided in the past. The effect of this comb is to restrict the queen and to obstruct the expanding brood nest which is so desirable both in producing a large population and in leading the colony safely past the swarming period.

For correct spacing there should be ten frames in each storey. This ensures even combs, a uniform bee space and the maximum accommodation for brood. In practice, however, all these advantages are outweighed by a single consideration—the difficulty of manipulating the tightly packed frames—so the custom is to use only nine. If a beekeeper using self-spacing frames had the time to scrape the propolis from the shoulders occasionally, perhaps once a year, he would get the best possible results with ten, and no trouble in manipulation.

In the extracting supers it is common to use nine combs for ease of handling and uncapping. Sometimes the number is even reduced to eight but the result is hardly as tidy. A few beekeepers find it advisable to strengthen the combs by using them first for two or three cycles of brood, but apart from this consideration it is preferable to have white combs in the extracting supers. Here we see one of the disadvantages of the Demaree procedure.

Comb Building

The use of comb foundation has solved the problem of securing good

combs, but care must still be taken to get the best results. The wires should be electrically embedded, and if they are taut it is best to fit the foundation into a single groove top bar with neither wax nor wedge fastening. The frames can then be transported without fear of damage and the bees will seal the foundation neatly into the groove before commencing to build. The foundations can be placed on the hive in the second extracting super, i.e. in the fourth storey, when the honey flow is well started. Put ten frames in each super. In this position, if there should be a cold snap, the bees can withdraw from the foundations without discomfort, but when the honey is coming in freely the combs will be drawn readily and without apparent effort. If the colony is in normal condition it is a mistake to mix the frames of foundation with drawn combs, either in the brood chamber or up above, as poor combs may result and the work of the bees is disrupted unnecessarily.

Discarding Combs

The bees may gnaw pieces from the combs, especially in the corners near the entrance, and more particularly when entrance blocks are used for extra ventilation—a practice which is of doubtful value. The wax moth is possibly troublesome in some districts, but in the south the greatest menace to combs is the humble mouse. Mice do not stray accidentally into hives, they are actively searching for board and lodging; consequently it is wise to take positive measures to shut them out during the winter months.

In culling poor combs the very small areas of drone cells must be tolerated because it is natural for the colony to include a few drones; in fact, the bees will usually insist on raising at least a nominal quota. But combs with extensive patches of drone cells should be either repaired or discarded and all weedy combs should be rejected without ceremony. Even to throw such combs away would be good business, but we know they will produce more than enough wax to furnish new foundations, so it is indeed foolish to keep them in use.

Even so, it takes courage to cull poor combs. The beekeeper should fix a standard firmly in his mind, and having done so all combs which are found wanting should be ruthlessly eliminated. The best time for this work is in the early spring, but even at that time many of the defective combs will be occupied by brood or honey. This makes it easy to shelve the matter by relegating them either to the sides of the brood nest (a feeble gesture) or to an extracting super above the excluder. The latter move is only partly successful; the bees will still reserve the drone cells for the queen until the last possible moment, and it is reason-

able to suppose that she spends a good deal of time trying to pass through the excluder to reach them—hardly a satisfactory state of affairs.

A suitable method for removing defective combs is to take them from the hives (replacing them with good combs) and set them aside in as many supers as are required. Each of these supers can then be placed below a vigorous colony, between the floor board and a queen excluder. At the end of a month or so the brood will have emerged and the honey will have been transferred upstairs. The combs can then be removed without any trouble.



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WORLD NEWS

U.S.A. Price Support

The March, 1954, issue of "Bee World" contains an article by H. J. Clay, of the United States Department of Agriculture, in which the honey price support programme in that country is reviewed. Price support programmes commenced with certain basic farm commodities during the depression of the 'thirties and in 1949 Congress approved honey for support at 60% to 90% of parity. ("Parity" represents the price which should give a commodity a purchasing power equal to the purchasing power of that commodity during a specified base period.) Honey was included in the support programme at the urgent request for assistance from representatives of the beekeeping industry, and the viewpoint of the House Committee on Agriculture was expressed in the following paragraph from a report issued in 1949:—

"Since the close of the war, the price of honey has dropped to the point where beekeepers are finding it impossible to obtain their costs of production. It appears obvious to the Committee that, if these vitally important insects are to be maintained in sufficient numbers to pollinate our crops, the beekeeping industry must have immediate assistance. Until the time comes when beekeepers can receive an adequate return from pollination services, the Committee believe that a price support for honey, as provided in this Bill, is the only answer to this problem."

Even prior to 1949 the Department had assisted the beekeeping industry by purchasing surplus stocks of honey, and this honey had been distributed either to needy countries overseas or to schools (for lunches) and institutions.

Since 1949 the support price has been available to producers who could not sell their honey otherwise to better advantage, and honey acquired by the Government under this scheme has been disposed of chiefly through schools and institutions. In addition to this form of support the Department has used

an export assistance programme whereby exporters of honey going to eligible destinations receive a subsidy (for thus lessening surplus supplies of honey). The assistance paid has been at the rate of 4 cents to 4½ cents per pound.

The Department also operates a honey diversion programme whereby financial assistance has been available to food manufacturers using honey in new products. This scheme has produced many new and promising outlets which should be of permanent value to the industry.

As the Department of Agriculture has carried on these types of assistance under a Congressional mandate, the support must be maintained, at 60% to 90% of parity, until Congress votes otherwise.

More recent information on price support is given in the "American Bee Journal" of May, 1954. The U.S. Department of Agriculture has now announced that extracted honey will be supported during the 1954 season, which started April 1, at a national average of 10.2 cents per pound. This is reported to be 70% of the current parity price adjusted to 60-pound containers.

At the same time the Department also announced that the honey export and diversion programmes will be continued during the 1954 season. The rate of payment on honey diverted will be 3.75 cents per pound, as compared to 4 cents per pound paid last year.

Australia

According to the "Australasian Beekeeper" the proposed Commonwealth Honey Marketing Plan has at last reached the stage when it is about to be placed before beekeepers and a poll is to be taken at an early date.

The scheme provides for a Board representing producers and packers in the principal States and all honey produced for sale will be under its control. The Board will not pack honey itself but will use the services of approved packing concerns acting as its agents. Individual producers may be exempted from supplying their honey provided they comply with the Board's conditions for such exemption.

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ENTHUSIASM

It is encouraging to detect a note of enthusiasm occasionally as in the following comment received from a beekeeper's wife:—

"We read your magazine regularly with interest. We are keenly interested in all aspects of honey production and marketing. I personally am a booster for honey in cookery and some day hope to do something worth while about it. Just think what it would mean to New Zealand producers if each homemaker used two cups (one pound) of honey more per annum in baking? I wish all beekeepers' wives would DO something about this. Some day when there is not so much work to be done perhaps those articles I'm resolving to write will get written! In the meantime there are no sponge cakes made in our home; instead delicious honey chocolate cakes are served, and often to beekeepers who are always amazed how good the cake is. Beekeepers will have to be educated before they can improve the public. As our American friends say, 'Improvement begins with I.'"

The Editor (and perhaps other Editors as well) is always glad to receive good recipes or any fresh ideas on using honey to advantage.

GADGETS AND IDEAS

SHAKING BEES FROM COMB

Question: How do you shake bees from combs or out of supers?—Ohio.

Answer: Hold the brood-frame with the fingers under the projecting end of the top-bars with the palm of the hand on top of the top-bar. By holding the frame in this way one can give a quick jerk downward, which will dislodge most of the bees from the comb. Italian bees, when shaken cling to their comb more than hybrids or blacks, so it is more difficult to dislodge them. After shaking off most of the bees in this way those remaining can be dislodged by giving one end of the top-bar a sharp blow with the palm of the hand while holding the frame in a horizontal position in the other hand. This can be repeated with the

other end of the frame. It is not possible to clean the bees out of supers by shaking the super, though in the case of black or hybrid bees many of them can be shaken out. Shaking heavy supers in this way is rather strenuous work, and it is much easier to drive the bees out with smoke or to place a bee-escape under the supers for 24 hours and let the bees go out of their own accord. While bees can be shaken off the combs as here described, the bee-escape is much to be preferred.

—"Gleanings."

HANDY TOOL

During my 35 years of beekeeping I have discovered a few common tools that have proven very useful in and around the honey house.

First of these is the common meat cleaver of small or medium size. I think the cleaver cannot be equalled as an instrument for scraping propolis and cleaning the wax and burr combs from supers and hives.

Dr. C. C. Miller in his book, "Fifty Years Among the Bees," used and recommended a common hatchet for this purpose, but I think he never discovered the meat cleaver for if he had he would never have mentioned the hatchet. The cleaver when used with a hammer is just the thing for cutting the tops out of the 60-pound honey cans or for cutting tin and roofing materials.

—E. G. Kyte in "Gleanings."

WEAK COLONIES

Weak colonies found after unpacking may be strengthened by setting them directly over strong colonies with a piece of newspaper and an excluder between them. Provide an upper entrance. Bees from the strong colonies will enter the weak ones and care for the brood.

Weak colonies will improve rapidly, if the queens are good, and may be returned to their original stands at your convenience. They may be strengthened also by adding brood from exceptionally strong colonies.

—W. L. Cogshall in "Gleanings."

Reflections

... from the Editor's Desk

New Farmlands

Anyone who walks along the shore of Lake Taupo can pick up huge boulders with ease and throw them out into the lake. This strange featherweight pumice-stone has given its name to the volcanic plateau in the Rotorua-Taupo part of the North Island—the pumice country. The region is relatively flat over wide areas, rising here and there into high volcanic cones, flat-topped hills and ridges. Thirty years ago the area was a vast wilderness of scrub and tussock, shunned by farming interests because of its hungry soils and the mysterious "bush sickness" which affected stock depastured there.

The transformation which is now taking place in the pumice country is described in the "Journal of Agriculture" of May, 1954. By the use of superphosphate and cobalt and certified seed the waste lands are being converted into first-class farmlands carrying excellent pastures of ryegrass and white clover. In the past few years an area of 100,000 acres has been brought into production and 20,000 acres of unimproved land is being sown to grass each year. Under the existing programme a total of over 320,000 acres is earmarked for development, and experience has shown that in the second year of permanent pasture pumice land will produce 100lb. of butterfat per acre, rising up to 150lb. and over as the herd and land improve.

And that is not the only avenue of progress. Over half a million acres of exotic forest, growing at record speed, is now coming to maturity, and two separate enterprises are being set up to tackle the mighty task of harvesting it. On the Waikato River a chain of 10 power stations is planned and three of these are already generating electricity. And still more power may be available if it is possible to harness some

of the underground steam in the thermal districts.

It seems likely that the brand-new farmlands will produce honey as well as butter, meat and wool. It is possible, too, that honey bees will play their part, in fact their services will be necessary, in propagating the clovers which form the basis of grass farming.

The only sad note in this story is the realisation that some unique features of our country are being lost for ever. There is beauty in everything, and the beauty of the desert has its fascination. Nothing that we can build will quite replace the Huka Falls, or the Aratiatia Rapids, or the Wairakei Valley, or even the wild horses galloping freely over the plateau.

White Cappings

Why do some races of bees produce whiter cappings than others? It is generally accepted that northern races leave a space between the honey and the capping, which appears white and dry, whereas the southern races fill the cell up to the brim, the capping then appearing dark and wet.

A Russian writer, V. A. Gubin, recently studied this subject and by making careful measurements found that the thermal expansion of wax was greater than that of honey. He concludes that if the temperature were greatly lowered the wax cell would burst, being unable to contain the honey which had contracted less. Hence the space left between the capping and the honey by northern races can be regarded as a safety margin. The southern races, not having been subjected to great temperature variations during their evolution, have not required this space.

The work of Gubin is summarised by M. Simpson in "Bee World."

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CORRESPONDENCE

(To the Editor)

Sir,—I wish to express thanks to those who voted for me at the election for the Honey Authority. To assist to get the Marketing Organisation operating efficiently will be my earnest desire.—Yours, etc.,

W. T. HERRON.

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Nom-de-plume letters must be signed by the writer and address given, not necessarily for publication, but as proof of good faith. Letters accepted for publication do not necessarily express the views of the Editor.

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