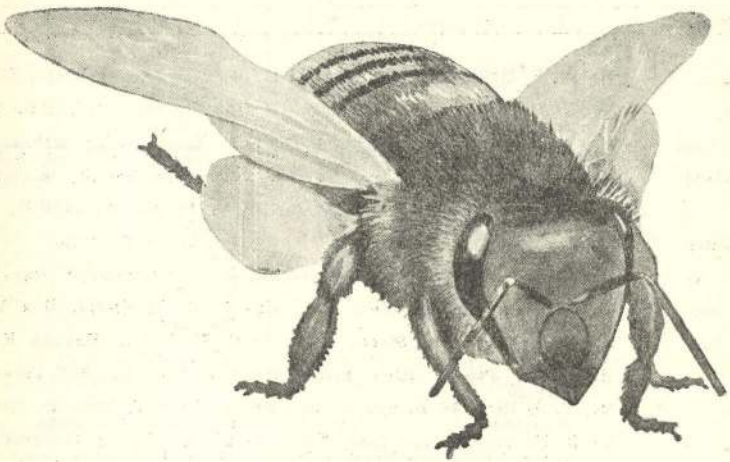
THE NEW ZEALAND BEEKEEPER

VOL. 16, No. 4 NOVEMBER, 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

THE NATIONAL BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION

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The New Zealand BEEKEEPER

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ROBERT STEWART

A milestone in the history of New Zealand beekeeping went by on October 20th, 1954, with the death of Mr Robert Stewart, of Heriot. Well known as New Zealand's foremost queen breeder, he was a leading authority on bee lore and he had developed a strain of Italian bees which has earned a reputation throughout the Dominion and in many countries overseas. At the funeral service a representative gathering of beekeepers attended to pay their respects; many of them had known him as a personal friend and he was honoured by all for his lifetime of service in the beekeeping industry.

Born 84 years ago on the Taieri Plain, Robert went to Crookston with his parents at the age of five and lived there and at nearby Heriot for the rest of his life. At an early age he became interested in the bees on his father's farm, and he was so absorbed in this work that he soon adopted beekeeping as his chosen vocation. In the course of a long career devoted at first to honey production and queen breeding, and later almost entirely to queen breeding, he achieved a wide reputation and he provided a foundation for the present high standard of commercial beekeeping in New Zealand.

Mr Stewart became a member of the Southland Beekeepers' Association, the foundation Branch of the National Beekeepers' Association, in the first year of its existence (1906) and in 1947 he was made a Life Member of the N.B.A. in recognition of his services to the industry. On the occasion of his retirement in 1950 he was the guest of honour at a dinner arranged by Otago and Southland beekeepers, and the esteem in which he was held was shown by the messages from far and near, including one from the Prime Minister. When the centennial history of beekeeping in Otago was compiled by Mr W. J. Lennon in 1948 the book "Bees in Their Bonnets" was dedicated to Robert Stewart and his biography takes pride of place among the notable men of the period.

As an indication of Mr Stewart's experience the following references are of interest:—

"Tapanui Courier," Feb. 9th, 1904: "Mr Robert Stewart, of Crookston, has had a very successful season amongst the bees this year. Already his output of honey has reached eight tons, and he expects to increase this for the season to ten tons. At 3½d per lb. net, this means a very handsome profit, and Mr Stewart is to be congratulated on the success of his perseverance in the study of bee culture. Needless to say, his appliances are up to date and he is an expert at manipulating the honey gatherer."

"Bees in Their Bonnets," 1948: "Seen at work in his yard of about 600 colonies, Mr Stewart still moves actively around the hives and his somewhat bent back gives an air of purpose and concentration that emphasise worthy characteristics of the man."

It is a matter for regret that Mr Stewart left no writings to pass on the benefit of his rich experience. Writing books or articles seemed to be outside his sphere, but he was always willing to help his fellow beekeepers either at his apiary or at meetings or field days, and often he would spend an hour solving their problems and difficulties. He would receive the questions with a quiet smile of tolerance and give the answers, often unexpectedly simple, with a touch of sly humour which endeared him to all. The tangible results of his work are to be found to-day in almost every apiary in New Zealand.

Of Robert Stewart it might be said that he observed the forces of nature at work and he saw their significance for one small half-century in the vast theatre of time. It was perhaps through his quietness and patience and humility that he was able to achieve so much.

AN APPRECIATION

The passing of Mr Robert Stewart, of Heriot, will be received with deep regret by beekeepers throughout the country. Even during his school days it was said that he was more interested in birds, bees and wild life than lessons, thus portraying early in life his love of nature. At that time he had acquired bees in box hives and he has told me how he would run home from school so that he could sit beside his hives and watch the bees work.

Mr Stewart was among the first to bring frame hives to the South Island. These opened up for him the wonders that were therein and he quickly became a very keen student of the bees. He learned how to make them build worker comb before the days of foundation, how to combat F.B., swarming and many other problems. After trying many varieties of bees, finding the Italian suitable for New Zealand conditions, he set about developing desirable traits and strains, giving us a bee that set the hallmark of quality throughout the Dominion.

The first to export honey, he became a producer in a big way, his early ventures in the export field returning little by way of monetary benefit, thus showing the necessity for an organised effort by producers to export profitably. Mr Stewart's fame, however, came from his queen rearing. Dominion-wide his queens were famous for working ability, non-swarming and quietness. I think it is safe to say they were unequalled.

It was a great pleasure and an education to follow him around his bee yard with the smoker in his hand; it was just all those little tit-bits that you don't get in books that made a visit to Mr Stewart so profitable and interesting. Watching him preparing queens for the post or cutting the natural cells from the comb, forming nuclei or making candy gave you immediately the knowledge that you were watching an expert of the highest order.

Quiet and retiring of disposition, I feel that if our beekeepers were more demonstrative, Mr Stewart would rank as a Langstroth or a Doolittle. His passing brings to an end a life of sincerity and service. He was generous and sympathetic to all those who had dealings with him, at all times the Christian gentleman. As a correspondent he took great care to give a full explanation on how to deal with the problems that beset beekeepers.

It is good for our industry that we have had a man of such sterling attributes and we should be glad that one has set such a high standard to which beekeepers should aspire.

The eldest son of a large family, himself unmarried, as a brother he was beloved, and we extend to his sisters and brothers our sincere sympathy.

—W.T.H.

APPEAL TO BEEKEEPERS

Recently attention has been drawn to the difficulty experienced by Apiary Instructors in establishing the ownership of some apiaries where no means of identification is at hand, and their work is impeded in this way. The difficulty could easily be overcome if the beekeeper provided a record of his name and address at each apiary. For instance, a one-inch stencil could be used to place the name on one hive or in any convenient place; the important thing is that it should be legible and permanent.

Some method of identification at apiaries is obviously essential to the work of the Department but a compulsory system is to be avoided if possible, and should be quite unnecessary, so I would urge beekeepers to co-operate in this matter. The request is a simple one. We all appreciate the work the Apiary Instructors have done for the industry and anything that can be done to assist them will be to the advantage of the beekeepers themselves.

E. D. WILLIAMS, Dominion President.

EXECUTIVE MEETING

A meeting of the General Executive was held in Wellington on October 28th and 29th, when all members were present and the President (Mr E. D. Williams) was in the chair.

Reference was made to the recent death of the General Secretary, Mr G. V. Fraser, and members expressed deep regret at the loss of one who had served the Association faithfully over the past twelve years, and who had earned the esteem of his many beekeeping friends. It was decided that a special minute be prepared to place on record a recognition of the services of the late General Secretary.

Regulations

The Executive has been given an assurance that the Honey Marketing Authority Regulations will be amended, as requested by the Association, in time for the next election of producer representatives. The particular amendments required are those requested at the Annual Conference, 1954.

Education

A suggestion for portraying the beekeeping industry through films was discussed with the Superintendent, Mr T. S. Winter, and it was agreed that every assistance should be given to the National Film Unit and the Department of Agriculture if it was decided to make a film, or a series of short films, featuring the production of honey. It was considered that such films might be of interest to the public and of value in educational work.

Price Order

The Cost of Production Schedule has been brought up to date and the Price Order for honey is at present under review. Any amendment to the Price Order resulting from this application will be gazetted before the new season's honey crop appears on the market.

Dollar Funds

Beekeepers desirous of importing equipment from dollar sources should apply in the normal way for an import licence, either personally or through an agent. Fair consideration will be given to such applications.

GENERAL SECRETARY

New Appointment Made

At the Executive meeting held in Wellington at the end of October, Mr R. A. Fraser was oppointed General Secretary of the National Beekeepers' Association. Mr Fraser is a son of the late Mr G. V. Fraser, with

whom he was associated in business at Foxton for the past several years. He has been Acting-General Secretary since the death of his father in August.

Mr Fraser is already familiar, to some extent, with the work of the Association, and the family connection with the late General Secretary gives him a warm introduction to the industry. We welcome him to the appointment, and we hope that he will derive pleasnre from the work.

HILLARY FUND

A collection of books on bees and beekeeping has been selected by the Council of the Bee Research Association, England, for presentation to Sir Edmund Hillary. The B.R.A. is sending to all who subscribed directly to the fund a copy of the bookplate (reproduced above) which has been inserted in each of the books. It was designed by Mr R. D. Simpson. As Sir Edmund will not be in England for a year or more the books are being sent to him in New Zealand, together with a cheque for £25, which represents the balance of the fund.

HEATHER HONEY

The reputation of heather honey in Scotland may be gauged from the following prices recommended by the executive of the Scottish Beekeepers' Association in a recent meeting at Stirling: Flower honey, 3/6 lb.; heather honey, 4/6.

MANUKA BLIGHT

"I am frightened that some well-meaning person will bring in a bug to kill the bug (manuka blight) and the introduced bug will be worse than the bug we have now."—Mr O. M. Spencer to Gisborne Federated Farmers.

THE PIONEERS

In opening the 1954 Timaru Course the Director of the Horticulture Division, Mr A. M. W. Greig, said that it was a fitting occasion to pay tribute to the South Island beekeeping pioneers who laid the foundations for an advisory service. The Otago Beekeepers' Association, formed in October, 1887, held regular demonstrations at the Botanical Gardens, Dunedin. The Canterbury Association initiated a conference in Wellington in 1910 at which the National Association was formed. The "National Beekeepers' Journal" was started in Dunedin in July, 1914.

Demonstrations or shows had been held as far back as 1906, he said. At the Christchurch International Exhibition there was a full-scale model working apiary which occupied half an acre. "In Dunedin to-day there is the largest factory in New Zealand manufacturing beekeeping equipment. In all agricultural countries beekeepers are welcomed by the farmers because of the value of bees as pollinators. In the South Island last year more than 2,750,000 of certified white and red clover seed were produced. It was valued at more than £500,000. Although this production of seed cannot be all attributed to the honey bee, there is no doubt that bees, as pollinators, played a major part."

OBITUARY.

MR R. GARRETT

A prominent and respected member of the N.B.A., Mr R. Garrett, of Wanganui, died on the 15th of October. Mr Garrett took an active part in the work of the Association over a long period and was for some years Secretary of the Wanganui Branch. He attended the Dominion Conference on numerous occasions, always taking an alert interest in the proceedings. Well known for his direct and practical outlook, he will be greatly missed at both local and national beekeepers' meetings and by a wide circle of personal friends.

We extend to Mrs Garrett our sincere sympathy in her bereavement.

GARNIE FRASER

His passing to his well-earned rest
Leaves a gap that's hard to fill,
For his fellows he always gave his best
With wisdom, tolerance, and goodwill.

Naught but his utmost would suffice,
And thus he served until the end,
So to-day we mourn him thrice,
The scribe, the man, the friend.

—Box-Hive Bertie.

HONEY CROPS

"You never get a good crop of honey after an open winter" is a saying heard at beekeepers' meetings this summer. Is there any truth in this?

Beekeepers remember the succession of good to wonderful crops in the 1930's when Ontario was going through a cycle of hard winters. The winter of 1933-34 was one of the toughest on record when hundreds of acres of fruit trees were winter killed. Yet the honey flows were excellent!

What is your experience?

—"Canadian Bee Journal."

THE NATIONAL BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION

An Invitation

"The N.Z. Beekeeper" is the official organ of the National Beekeepers' Association of New Zealand (Inc.), an organisation for the advancement of the beekeeping industry in New Zealand. In the fifty years or so of its existence the Association has identified itself with the movement toward better beekeeping and better marketing, and the voluntary services of its members down the years have contributed to the present status of the honey industry.

At a recent meeting the General Executive, realising that there are some beekeepers who are not at present members of the Association, decided to extend the circulation of the Journal to include these producers. The objective is to provide a news service relating to the work of the Association, the Department of Agriculture, the Honey Marketing Authority, and other matters of general interest which will embrace all commercial honey producers. In this way it is hoped that a spirit of unity, co-operation and progress can be nourished in the honey industry. Accordingly this issue of the Journal, and subsequent issues, will be sent to ALL beekeepers having 30 or more registered hives.

To our new readers the Executive extends a cordial invitation to become members of the Association. Many benefits are to be gained from discussions and demonstrations at Branch Meetings and Field Days, especially as these functions provide a personal contact with Apiary Instructors and the marketing administration. In addition to the general advantages of membership most members avail themselves of the Association's insurance scheme, under which the beekeeper is covered (within limits) against claims resulting from injury to persons or property by his bees.

Beekeeping in New Zealand is now recognised as an important and reputable branch of primary production. Every responsible honey producer must be interested in the future of the craft, and he should consider it a duty to take an active part in the work of the Dominion organisation and so contribute his share toward the welfare of the industry.

A list of Branch Secretaries may be found on page 2 of this Journal, while the subscription and insurance rates are given inside the back cover. The financial year of the Association ends on 31st May. Beekeepers who wish to join are invited to do so by completing the form overleaf. We recommend that it be forwarded to the nearest Branch Secretary in order to secure the extra benefits of Branch membership, but where this is not convenient the application can be sent direct to the General Secretary. Direct Members, as well as Branches, are kept fully informed of the work of the Association.

APPLICATION FORM

(Please read information overleaf)

Date.....

The Secretary,

.....Branch,

.....

(Or the General Secretary, P.O. Box 19, Foxton.)

Please enrol me as a Member of your Association.

I have a total of.....colonies in.....registered apiaries and enclose:—

£ : : being Annual Subscription and

£ : : being premium for Apiary Insurance.

Total £ : :

Signed.....

Name and Full Address (block letters):

.....

.....

.....

BEEKEEPING INSTRUCTION COURSE

Well over one hundred beekeepers were present at the course held in Timaru on September 14, 15 and 16, making it probably the largest gathering of commercial honey producers ever seen in New Zealand. It was the first "farm school" for beekeepers to be held in the Dominion, although a somewhat similar course was held at Hamilton in 1949, when sixty-one returned servicemen of World War II attended.

The programme was arranged by the Horticulture Division in conjunction with the South Canterbury Branch of the N.B.A., with the object of reviewing the latest technical advances in beekeeping. The Dominion President (Mr E. D. Williams) and the Chairman of the Honey Marketing Authority (Mr E. A. Field) were present by special invitation.

At the opening session the visitors were welcomed by the Mayor of Timaru (Mr R. E. White), who explained that for some years he had been a small seeds farmer so he was well aware of the importance of bees in agriculture. It was perhaps not generally appreciated, he said, that in their work of pollination honey bees performed a service of even greater value than in the production of honey. He hoped members would enjoy their stay in Timaru and gain benefit from the course of instruction.

The "school" was then officially opened by the Director of the Horticulture Division (Mr A. M. W. Greig), who previewed the programme which was to follow and mentioned the scope of the work being done by the Division. In the course of his remarks Mr Greig stressed the value of the National Beekeepers' Association as a means of co-ordination among producers so that the advisory service of the Division could be given most effectively.

During the first day addresses were given by Mr T. S. Winter, "Beekeeping Legislation"; Mr C. R. Paterson, "Installation of Cool Rooms"; Mr L. H. Johnson, "Honeyhouse Construction"; and Mr Paterson, "Removal of Excess Moisture in Honey."

The evening was devoted to a talk by Mr T. Palmer-Jones, who discussed the technique and practical application of artificial insemination of queen bees, and this was followed by a comprehensive display and demonstration of honeyhouse and apiary equipment arranged by the South Island Apiary Instructors.

The programme for the second day included addresses by Mr R. S. Walsh, "Preparation of Honey by Producers and Honey Grading"; Mr I. W. Forster, "Selection of Breeding Strains"; Mr T. Palmer-Jones, "Effect of DDT Phosphate on Honeybees"; and Mr. C. R. Paterson, "Standard Methods of Apiary Management."

This concluded the "farm school" and the remainder of the programme was in the hands of the South Canterbury Branch.

At the second evening meeting addresses were given by Mr E. D. Williams and Mr E. A. Field, when the present state of the honey industry was briefly reviewed. A very fine film made by Mr B. T. Cloake showing honeybees and commercial beekeeping was then presented, and two further short films featured Field Days at North Otago and South Otago.

On the final day a monster Field Day was held at the home apiary of Walter Watson and Co., Geraldine, in pleasant surroundings and ideal weather. The apiary buildings and equipment were open for inspection and the principal speakers were Messrs T. E. Pearson, T. Palmer-Jones, I. W. Forster, F. Bartrum and J. W. Fraser.

So concluded the course, a very well organised, helpful and stimulating event, and certainly a most enjoyable one. Complimentary references were made to the work of Officers of the Division in arranging and carrying out the function, and to the South Canterbury Branch for its assitance in completing the programme.

Mr T. S. Winter (Beekeeping Superintendent) was in the chair at the "farm school" sessions and Mr H. Cloake presided at the final evening function and at the Field Day.

HONEY MARKETING AUTHORITY

Financial Position

The year ended 31st August, 1954, was a very satisfactory one notwithstanding the dislocation resulting from the transfer from departmental to producer control and falling prices overseas. The volume of export sales was one redeeming feature and the overall results were such that the Authority has been able to declare a bonus of 3½d per lb. for graded honey and 1¾d per lb. for manuka honey. This result was arrived at without encroaching this year upon reserves. Since the end of the financial year the overseas market has shown some improvement.

Advance for New Season's Honey

The Authority has decided to increase the advance payment for new season's honey to 9d per lb. pro rata for graded honey and 7d per lb. for manuka honey.

Contracts

The contract system will be in operation again this year but with several variations as mentioned below:—

Producers will be entitled to contract either for a specified quantity with a 25% tolerance either way or alternatively they may elect to supply the whole of their production with the exception of consumer sales at the apiary. To qualify for the contract bonus, honey must obtain at least 85% of the flavour points obtainable and 50% of the colour points obtainable and the honey must be delivered to one of the Authority's depots not later than 30th June, 1955. The contract premium will be ¾d per lb. Contracts should be forwarded to the Authority by 7th December, 1954. If any beekeeper has not a contract form in his possession provisional application by letter or telegram will be accepted by the date mentioned provided it is followed up by the completion of the contract form.

Straightout Purchase of New Season's Honey

The Authority is prepared to consider buying honey on a straightout purchase basis from those beekeepers who desire a final settlement without waiting for the declaration of the seasonal bonus.

Depots

Arrangements have been made for honey to be received at the following centres:—

Dunedin—Messrs Spencer & Dunkley's Limited's Store.

Greymouth—Messrs W. Greenhill & Co. Limited's Store.

Christchurch—Department of Agriculture's Store at Addington—this is a portion of the old Marketing Division Store and last season's arrangements with the Department of Agriculture will continue temporarily.

Auckland—New Zealand Honey Marketing Authority, corner Nelson and Fanshawe Streets, Auckland.

W. H. CHUDLEY.
Manager.

The lecturer was a celebrated Doctor of Law, and his talk was to be on "Fools." The chairman, who was something of a humorist, stood up to introduce him.

"Ladies and Gentlemen," he said, "we are now to have a lecture on fools by one"—he paused, and there was loud laughter before he resumed—"of the wisest men in the country."

The lecturer then rose to speak. "Ladies and Gentlemen," he said, "I am not half as big a fool as the chairman"—he paused, and again there was loud laughter—"would have you suppose."

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
HORTICULTURE DIVISION

BEGINNING OF BEEKEEPING IN NEW ZEALAND AND BEEKEEPING LEGISLATION

The importance of agriculture to mankind is so fully acknowledged that we are not surprised at the attention given to it from the earliest period of man's history.

While other pursuits may offer greater prizes in the battle of life, especially during the past century, we almost invariably find the cultivator of the soil and the beekeeper more contented with his lot. His occupation besides supplying nearly all the comforts of life with many of its luxuries, also allows more freedom to express individual character and to live naturally in fairly close touch with nature.

In all walks of life men are to be found who are not satisfied to accept things as they find them and who continually strive to find new ways and better methods which tend to bring the fruits of the earth within easy reach of mankind.

Although there are two varieties of the bee family indigenous to New Zealand, neither of these are of any use as honey bees, consequently the very early settlers were unable to avail themselves of the abundance of nectar available in the native flora.

The first hive bees were brought to New Zealand from England in 1839 and were landed at Mangaranga, Hokianga, in March of that year. Later shipments were also successfully introduced in 1840 and in 1842. These were undoubtedly the first consignments of bees to successfully reach New Zealand.

Methods of beekeeping in the early days were cruel and wasteful, and were similar in nearly every respect to those employed in Britain at that time. A prominent feature of the primitive hive system in use was the sulphuring of the bees in most of the hives at the end of the season to obtain the honey they stored.

While some beekeepers followed the European fashion and constructed picturesque straw skep hives, the majority of settlers used common boxes or gin-cases with cross sticks running through them to support the combs.

Both these methods, however, necessitated the destruction of most of the bees at the end of the season to get the honey they produced.

The rude hives and implements then in use did not allow systematic work in the apiary nor did they allow the beekeeper to acquire an intimate knowledge of the life history and habits of the bees, so necessary to successful apiary management.

Further shipments of bees from Australia and America combined with the natural swarming tendency of the bees under uncontrolled conditions, soon furnished a large bee population throughout New Zealand.

Methods used to obtain the honey were very crude. The combs were crushed and placed in coarse cloth bags or sacking and hung up to drain. Continual squeezing would separate a good deal of the honey and the balance would be wasted.

Another method was to break up the combs of honey and place the whole in a boiler and heat until all was melted. When cool the honey was drained off into containers. This method destroyed the natural flavour and colour of the honey to a large extent.

The Maoris too, soon found that honey was a pleasing and desirable food. They obtained their supplies by finding bees' nests in the hollows of trees in bush areas and seldom troubled to strain or drain the honey. The older Maoris even to recent times preferred to eat a mixture of honey, wax, and bee grubs, just as it came.

These conditions continued until more and more early settlers arrived, when fruit-growing, beekeeping and vegetable culture began to attract attention on a semi-commercial basis, in addition to other agricultural pursuits.

For many years these industries proceeded along as best they could in a more or less disorganised fashion.

Insect pests and common diseases, once introduced, ran riot in almost undisturbed possession, due in the main to a general lack of knowledge and no responsible authority with power to deal with the situation.

The land and foundation stocks were here combined with a suitable climate for all kinds of agricultural products, but the settler required advice and guidance before he could avail himself fully of the new opportunities presented to him. The colonist therefore turned to the Government for assistance and so we find the provision of advisers and instructors followed by regulatory and inspection services established by popular demand.

It was soon realised, however, that a purely instruction service without power to enforce proper measures for the control of pests and diseases, was insufficient to foster rural industries, and in due course as conditions and public opinion demanded, suitable legislation giving the necessary powers of inspection and enforcement of regulations was built up.

The creation of the Department of Agriculture in 1892 was marked by the adoption of a progressive policy of instruction and encouragement in the development of agricultural resources, and a steady enlargement of the scope of the Department's activities took place in succeeding years.

Times were difficult and opinions were divided in regard to the necessity for legislation giving power to deal effectively with pests and diseases affecting rural industries. In 1896, however, powers to appoint inspectors and deal with orchard pests were taken under the Orchards and Gardens Pests Act which was passed that year.

The beekeeping industry next received attention through the appointment of Mr Isaac Hopkins as Government Apiarist in January, 1905.

Early in 1906 the first Apiaries Act was drafted and passed into law. This Act was amended the following year, and two Apiary Inspectors were appointed in 1908.

In many parts of New Zealand, the exhaustion of soil fertility caused primarily by the depletion of soluble minerals and the destruction or dissipation of humus, slowed down agriculture considerably for a time, and beekeeping suffered in consequence in areas that were considered suitable for the production of high quality honeys from white clover and mixed pasture sources.

Then came a new era for New Zealand farming. Soil exhaustion was overcome by manurial topdressing and in districts where rainfall has always been at a minimum, irrigation has given new life to country at one time considered almost barren and quite unsuitable for beekeeping.

In 1909 five major Departmental Divisions were created, including the Division of Orchards, Gardens and Apiaries. This Division dealt with the administration of:

1. The Orchards and Gardens Act, 1908.
2. The Apiaries Act, 1908.
3. The Produce Export Act, 1908, insofar as it is related to fruit, vegetables, hops and honey.

Improved conditions gradually became evident in the beekeeping industry, and when Messrs W. B. Bray and R. Gibb (the first inspectors appointed to work with Mr Hopkins) left the service to take up commercial beekeeping, four new inspectors were appointed.

Further assistance was given by the establishment of a State queen rearing apiary at Waerenga and later at Tauranga for the supply of queen bees of good strain and quality. The distribution of queens from these apiaries had a beneficial effect on the stocks of bees throughout New Zealand. This work was later carried on at Ruakura State Farm, Hamilton, together with the training of cadets in theoretical and practical beekeeping.

In 1915 further assistance was provided by the introduction of compulsory export grading regulations. This gave confidence to overseas buyers of New Zealand honey and protected the industry against packers who might possibly ruin our overseas trade by careless packing or supply of inferior quality honey.

Here you have some of the background to the beekeeping industry as we know it to-day.

During the past three years every endeavour has been made by the Department to bring beekeeping legislation in New Zealand, based on the Apiaries Act, 1927, up to date.

This has been done in stages as circumstances demanded and after full consultation with the Executive of the N.B.A. and producer representatives connected with the Honey Marketing Authority of the day.

Beekeeping legislation at present:

1. **Apiaries Act, 1927.**

2. **The Apiaries Diseases Order, 1950.**

   This order declares the disease known as Nosema apis and the bee louse (Braula coeca) to be diseases within the meaning of the Apiaries Act, 1927, and thus gives the Department better control over the importation of bees under authority of a permit granted by the Minister of Agriculture.

3. **The Honey Export Regulations, 1950.**

   These regulations consolidate with some amendments the old regulations governing the grading of honey for export, and bring them into line with present-day requirements.

4. **Apiaries Amendment Act, 1951.**

   Section 2—Gives power to an Inspector to proceed against any person who refuses to remove bees established in buildings owned or occupied by him, within a specified time.

   Section 3—Relaxes previous restrictions on the movement of disease-free bees and apiary appliances by a beekeeper between his registered apiaries, for management purposes.

   Section 4—Makes it an offence to sell or to give away any honey from hives infected with disease.

   Section 5—Enables prevention of the introduction of any undesirable strains of bees.

5. **The Apiaries Regulations, 1952.**

   Deals with the importation of bees into New Zealand and the keeping of bees in any prohibited area.

6. **Apiaries Amendment Act, 1953.**

   Requires beekeepers to keep the normal access to the hives in

an apiary clear from obstructions caused by the growth of vegetation which would impede or prevent inspection of the bees for disease control purposes. Also prohibits the spraying of fruit trees, and berry fruit plants, e.g., raspberry, strawberry, boysenberry or loganberry plants, during the blossoming period with any preparation containing any poisonous substance injurious to bees.

7. **The Apiary Registration Regulations, 1953.**

Simplifies apiary registration procedure and associated work. The registration of apiaries is now decentralised to offices of Apiary Instructors.

BEEKEEPING BULLETINS AND PAMPHLETS AVAILABLE

The following bulletins and pamphlets prepared by officers of the Department in recent years are available to beekeepers:

Bulletin No. 267—"Beekeeping in New Zealand," 2/6 post free.

Bulletin No. 242—"Bee Diseases" (free).

Pamphlets:

Plan of Stanard Hive Equipment.

Honey House Construction and Layout (six plans).

Use of Pollen Supplements in New Zealand.

Diseases of Bees in New Zealand.

Production of Honey Mead from New Zealand Honeys.

Observations on the Treatment of Nosema Apis with Drugs.

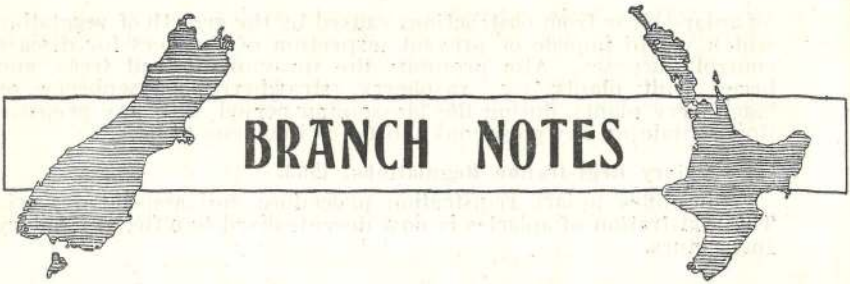
Conditioning of Bees to Control Pollination.

Effect on Honey Bees of D.D.T. plus Superphosphate applied as a Dust with Clover Pasture.

Available soon:

Vacuum Plant for Removing Excess Moisture from Honey.

—T. S. WINTER,
Superintendent, Beekeeping Industry.



SOUTH AUCKLAND

The most important change in Branch affairs this year has been the retirement from the offices of President and Secretary of Mr Jim Barber and Mr Dudley Lorimer respectively. Mr Barber combined an exceeding toleration with a great deal of tact and on countless occasions when we began to wonder if the meeting were developing into a U.S. Senate filibuster, Jim would interrupt the offender with his inevitable and unchanging dampener: "Yes, well I think we've heard..." and so on. Mr Lorimer always showed considerable energy in organising our meetings and field days and in doing so did many things (that I am just beginning to find out about!) so well. We congratulate him on the higher office to which he has been elected.

Mr H. Geddes, of Rotorua, who has been beekeeping a mere 56 years and has been a member of the N.B.A. for 22 years, has retired. His fervid speeches always contained a spark and we will miss his interest in and attendance at our meetings.

At a recent meeting another man with very considerable experience, Mr Ray Clark, of Matamata, gave a very interesting talk about his trip through North America, where he visited and was impressed by the very complicated machinery used to pack liquid honey so that it will remain liquid. He also brought back a waxed carton with a folding top which was sealed by heat. But perhaps of most interest was his disclosure of the fact that some American beekeepers are renting thousands of hives to orchardists for quite a lucrative sum. If we could afford to, and arrange for the bees in this country to go on strike, perhaps with the consequent drop in dairy production, we could reverse the apiary rental policy in this country.

The Branch decided to make a real effort with its stand at the Waikato Winter Show in Hamilton this year, and judging from the unsolicited headlines it received in Auckland and Hamilton newspapers it must have been a great success. The display included an implied injunction to the Waikato Rugby team to emulate the policy of the Olympic marthon runners in taking honey during the race so that the return of the Ranfurly Shield would be assured. But, alas, they must have forgotten to take our honey down with them and been forced to substitute South Island honey. Or more likely they couldn't get any honey at all, for surely there can't be a carton —sorry, pottle—left down there now!

Hives have wintered quite well and we have had an unusually fine spring so far, which has enabled the bees to rely less on the beekeeper and more on nature, which may have benefited the bees as much as the beekeepers. Some areas, however, are getting very strong. With lack of rain the pasture is backward for this time of the year, but who will say now whether the crop will be early or late?

—Robert R. Chandler.

HAWKES BAY

The interest of members and friends continues to be sustained in field days held by the Branch. The latest successful gathering was held on 6th October, when about forty people met at the home of Mr M. Leete, the Branch President. Interesting practical demonstrations were given by Mr Griffen, the Apiary Instructor, and Mr G. Gordon. Both illustrated their talks with a hive of very gentle bees brought up that day for the purpose. Perhaps the change of location let the field bees go back home while the quieter nurse bees gave an impression of more gentleness than is usually the case! A hive that allows itself to be opened twice without anyone getting stung adds considerably to the pleasure of the afternoon. That the queen has since gone to the South Island to modify the ferocity of some of the southern inhabitants, is considered to be a move in the right direction.

It was expected that two members of Parliament would be in attendance. Mr S. I. Jones was unable to attend and sent his apologies. Mr C. G. E. Harker attended and spoke several words that were listened to with interest and appreciation. After conveying the good wishes of the Minister of Marketing, Mr Holyoake, Mr Harker urged members to keep the interest and membership of the Branch strong. The Association could speak with a stronger voice when it represented the majority of people engaged in the industry. Mr Harker also urged on the gathering the importance of the New Zealand market for honey. Not only was the population increasing but it was also conscious of quality. Good wishes were conveyed to Mr Harker for his own field day on November 13th.

Mrs Leete and her helpers had an afternoon tea that would have graced a wedding breakfast ready for the exhausted speakers and listeners. In a few years, the Leetes have transformed a barren hilltop into a homestead of charm and beauty. One corner that is planted in cacti almost looks like the pictures of Mexico. Even the President's workshop, complete with every modern convenience—even to an arc welder—was visited with envious eyes. We hope the envy did not go further than looks. It was a delightful situation looking over the fertile Heretaunga plains and voted by everyone to be one of the best functions held by the Branch in recent years.

Death of Mr G. V. Fraser

The following resolution has been placed on record:

"The Executive of the Hawkes Bay Branch places on record its sense of loss at the death of Mr G. V. Fraser, our General Secretary, and its sympathy with Mrs Fraser and members of the family. Our members regarded Mr Fraser as a valued friend and a gentleman who honoured his profession."

—P. Berry.

SOUTH CANTERBURY

On Friday, the 17th of September, our Branch held their Spring Field Day at the home apiary of Messrs Walter Watson and Co., Geraldine. We had a programme this time and experienced the usual hitches which occur when a planned day is attempted. Local beekeepers and visitors totalled over 160, and we were favoured with a perfect day. Our demonstrators included Mr T. Pearson of Darfield, Mr J. Fraser of Southland, and from the Agricultural Department Mr Palmer-Jones, Mr I. W. Forster, Mr F. Bartrum. Our visitors included Mr T. Winter, Mr D. Williams, Mr E. Field. Four members of the Honey Marketing Authority were present, as were four members of the National Executive. Beekeepers from Nelson, West Coast, Canterbury, North Otago, Otago and Southland were present. For some years the Editor of our Journal has attended one field day every year in South Canterbury, and he did not miss this one.

To my mind the two most outstanding features of this Field Day were, first, that a bulldozer had been used to clear the beeyard for the field day, and second, the amount of business, formal and informal, that was carried out during the day by

small groups. The Branch had invited manufacturers' representatives to be present and beekeepers made good use of their presence to order their supplies, or to lodge their complaints. We take this opportunity of thanking all demonstrators and visitors for their attendance.

—Robert Davidson.

OTAGO

There won't be any swarms floating around the suburbs of Dunedin this summer. At the August meeting of the Otago Branch the subject of swarm control was tackled from all directions by Apiary Instructor S. Line and twelve other speakers, and the problem was annihilated. The question was certainly a topical one because the bees are inclined to build up far too rapidly amid the profusion of early nectar sources in the sheltered localities around the city. Thirteen were present at the meeting.

To those who find difficulty in performing the more complicated manipulations or in handling really powerful colonies, the following bold suggestion is offered: Gas off all the weak, poor and bad-tempered units in the autumn or early spring, and divide the remainder (30% to 50% of the total) so that each part will build up to two storeys of bees and brood by mid-December (instead of mid-October). If the beekeeper raises the new queens himself instead of buying them, so much the better, it will use up some of the surplus bee energy.

On second thoughts, there may be the odd swarm this year on account of the peculiar season and the contrary nature of the bees. But there won't be any next year.

Vespa Germanica.—It will be interesting to see whether the wasps come to Otago. It is now about three years since they were first reported in Nelson and it has taken them all that time to move on to Canterbury, so perhaps they will stop about the line of the Waitaki River. As a guide to what we can expect, we find that the mason wasp (an enterprising insect) is common in Canterbury but rare in Otago. Again, magpies and rooks are plentiful in Canterbury, whereas further south there are none at all (definitely no rooks). The reason for this phenomenon is something which Otago people are unable to discover.

—J. McFadzien.

GORE

Big preparations are in hand for the combined Field Day of the Gore and Southland Branches to be held at the apiary of Glass Brothers, Waikaka Valley, on the first Saturday in February, 1955. The meeting promises to be an outstanding event and a cordial welcome is extended to visitors from other districts.

—F. J. Glass.

EUCALYPTS

The "Australian Bee Journal" reports that the eucalyptus is becoming a world-known tree. Originally native of Australia, eucalypts were brought to the west coast of the United States many years ago. California eucalyptus honey is recognised in the trade as an amber honey of not too high a grade. Probably eucalypts serve best as colony builders out there.

Recently Soviet Russia is proceeding vigorously with a programme of gum tree planting in the southern sections of the Soviet Union. "Haile Selassie imported and planted many millions of gums throughout his African domain before the Italian invasion, and Mussolini used the tree as his main ally in reclamation of the Pontine marshes."

TRY ANYTHING

The "Daily Telegraph's" Paris correspondent, Roland Pullen, tells of French women's latest beauty aid. Royal Jelly, in addition to shark oil, chicken embryo, pig plasma, bran and pollard, strawberries, lemons and raspberries, has been put on the market by some of the two million persons engaged in full-time promotion of feminine beauty aids.

NOTES FOR BEGINNERS

By "SKEP"

If all the beekeepers who read this Journal could have attended the recent Beekeeping Course held at Timaru, and the Field Day following it at Geraldine, it would scarcely be necessary for me to contribute my page in this issue.

Most beekeepers left these gatherings so full of knowledge that it seems doubtful whether they will be able to absorb any further material for some time to come. I therefore write for those unfortunate enough to miss these classic events.

All beekeepers do not recognise the immense value of these gatherings. I cannot over-emphasise their importance.

The spirit which pervades a beekeepers' Field Day is grand to see.

So interested are the folk in beekeeping lore that all social, political, and religious barriers are down. The gathering develops into a group with but a single theme. Full interest and enjoyment of any activity involves sharing that interest with others.

In all trades and professions men and women gather together at intervals to "talk shop," to learn the latest trends and developments in their industry, and to associate with their fellows.

Make it your resolution never to become a hermit beekeeper. Make a big effort to attend all Branch meetings and Field Days whenever it is possible for you to do so.

Most readers of this Journal will, no doubt, already be members of the National Beekeepers' Association, but if you know of neighbouring beekeepers who are not, make it your business to interest them. Not only will you be doing these folk a good turn, but you will be helping yourself also. The larger our organisation grows the greater the benefit to all concerned.

New Ideas

Wherever beekeeping methods are discussed the cry is always "Give us something new." This clamour for new ideas is in some respects a selfish one, but nevertheless it has a great deal to commend it.

Over the years much that is helpful has been made known. Usually this thirst for something new is sponsored by the desire to make things easier—to obviate the need for hard toil.

This, I am afraid, is wishful thinking. After grasping eagerly, over a long period, at anything which seemed to offer even the slightest respite, I have reluctantly come to the conclusion that there is no easy way to make a living, or even a part of a living, from bees.

Try out the new ideas you hear of by all means. It adds greatly to the interest of your work, and there is every possibility that something worthwhile will be achieved, but here let me sound a note of warning: always proceed with the utmost caution.

It is very wrong to assume that you are an outmoded beekeeper just because someone else does things differently.

The methods and tricks which have given you good results over a long period should not be discarded easily.

There is often very good reason for the established practices in your district. A new plan which works well for another beekeeper may prove quite unsatisfactory in your changed conditions.

For instance, methods for the spring introduction of queens, always a tricky business, vary quite a good deal from one beekeeper to another. Each stresses the merits of his own scheme, and each is sincere in his beliefs that his plan is by far the best. A change-over, however, does not always work out so well, and many are the howls of disappointment.

Be cautious. Try out the other fellow's scheme on a small scale for

a start. If it seems satisfactory and offers some advantages, proceed further, but do not risk everything on an idea which, for you, has still to stand the test of time.

In order to illustrate my theme further, let me take two projects in which beekeepers seem to display growing interest.

The Paper Bag

Firstly, let us consider the salutary paper bag method of introducing queens.

This, in case you have not heard of it, entails taking a brown paper bag 6 inches by 8 inches, punching two rows of holes across it by running it under a sewing machine without thread, using the widest stitch possible; placing a 4lb. mustard tin full of bees into it from the hive into which the new queen is to be introduced, dropping the queen in, and placing the bag and contents between two frames in the centre of the broodnest.

Some beekeepers have had spectacular success with this method under difficult conditions. Others have had disappointing failures.

With this, as with other things connected with bees, small things can make all the difference between success and failure.

I myself have had considerable success, and I have endeavoured to check up on the reasons for failures reported.

The most obvious reason for failure seems to be the wide difference in the quality and type of bags available. Many bags of this size are so flimsy as to be almost transparent when looked through from the inside. It would appear that the hive bees would make contact with the captives almost immediately. Bags of this type would work better with no holes punched at all. The most successful users seem to be those employing strong glazed surface brown paper bags.

The need for caution here is obvious. Queens are valuable and expensive to buy or raise.

Baby Nuclei

After many years in discard, baby nuclei are again coming to the fore. Some of the earlier difficulties have been overcome, and the box now in favour has many advantages over the old style. There is no doubt that good queens can be mated with only a bare minimum of attendants. The quantity at present favoured is a 1lb. honey carton full.

Proceed carefully here, if you are tempted to try. You will need a good knowledge of bee behaviour before you can hope to make a success of this venture.

The scheme is good and works well in the right hands. It may prove helpful to you if you start slowly, thus gaining knowledge as you go, without major loss of time or queen cells.

Work for November

Feeding may still be necessary in some districts. Hives which have good bee strength can consume incredible amounts of food if no nectar source is available at this period. A loss of crop or even total loss of colonies can occur at this stage unless the beekeeper keeps on the job.

Any re-queening not yet carried out should be completed at the earliest possible moment. Undue delay now means that the hive with a lagging queen will not be able to build up in time for the major honey flow.

Take entrance guards off. Keep entrances clear of weeds and growth. Give hives which are of normal strength two broodnests and, where necessary, a super above the excluder.

In early districts check hives over regularly for swarm cells. In cases where the queen is good, the breaking down of cells a few times will usually cause the hive to give up the idea of swarming. Plenty of comb space should be provided to easily accommodate the hive population, and to give storage space for any honey gathered.

Work for December

With all your preliminary work done, and possibly some source of nectar available, prospects for a honey crop often look very rosy just now.

If the swarming instinct could be completely eliminated, beekeeping would be a comparatively simple

pastime. This instinct is, however, a very, very strong one, and, instead of resting on his laurels this month, the beekeeper must exercise considerable vigilance lest all his previous efforts be nullified by a large section of his bees absconding as a swarm.

If you have only a small number of hives in a handy position at home, the issuing of a swarm is not such a serious matter. The swarm can often be collected. If it is a large one, good results can be obtained by placing it in a new hive. Bees in this condition display an amazing amount of energy.

Should it be only average to small, the best procedure is to move the parent hive to a new position and hive the swarm on the old stand. In this way a good deal of the working force of the original hive is added to the swarm and good results can be obtained.

Either of these schemes will give you an increased number of hives. If you require the increase, all is well, but if increase is an embarrassment to you, adopt the latter plan, being careful to move the old hive only a short distance or perhaps just turn it, facing in the opposite direction from normal. When the young queen in the parent hive is mated and laying well, kill the queen in the recently hived swarm, and after shaking all the bees in the parent hive into one super, unite the two by placing a double sheet of newspaper between them.

This will keep you down to your original number of hives, and you replace the old queen in the swarm with the young one reared in the depleted parent hive.

Swarm Control

Swarming is a seasonal instinct, and often hives can be dissuaded from swarming by destroying queen cells every ten days until the urge passes.

Effective control really begins long before the swarming season. The fundamentals are: (1) A young, vigorous queen of non-swarm strain, raised and introduced as early in the spring as possible; (2) ample comb space to prevent overcrowding and provide space in advance for the storage of honey; (3) a good entrance. Strips on the floorboard should be ⅜in. deep, and the opening should extend right across the front of the hive.

December is the month for swarms —dealing with it is your main work.

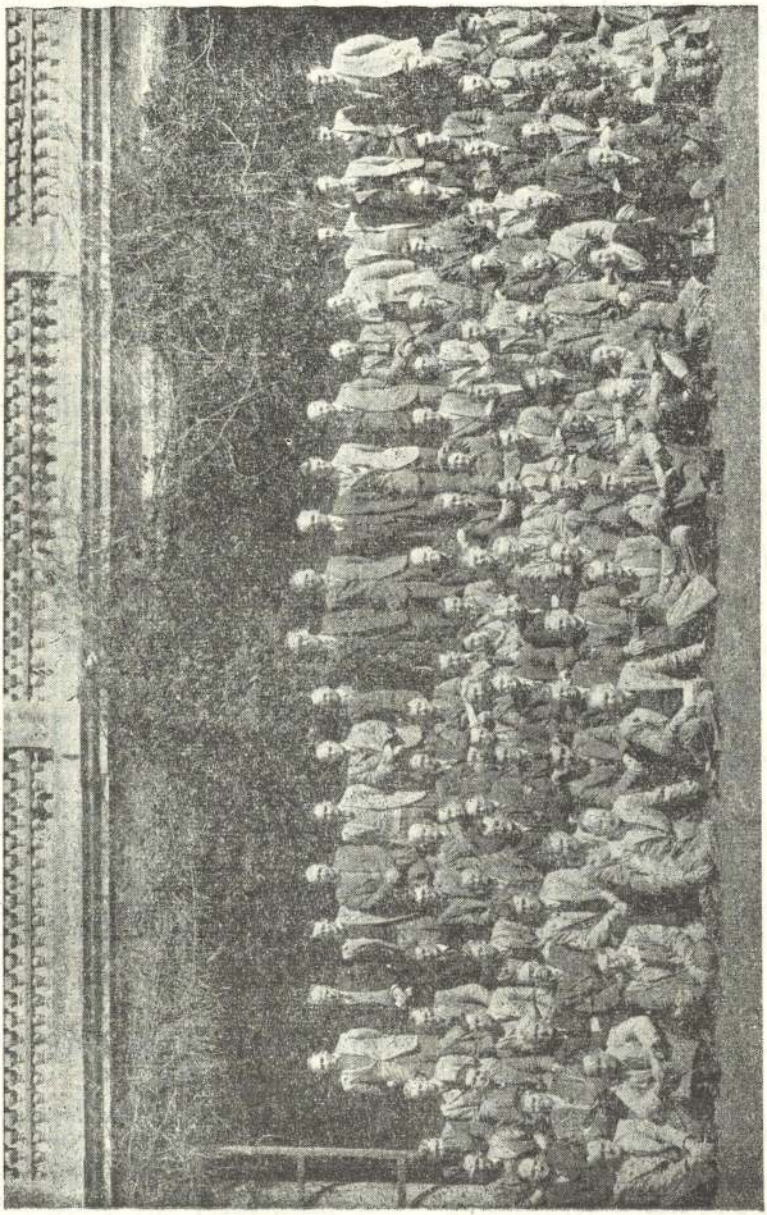
Work for January

The seasonal urge to swarm usually passes early in January.

Once this occurs the wise beekeeper checks on super room occasionally, but otherwise leaves his hives alone. No one can get on with a job if constantly interrupted. Bees are no exception to this rule. Once the main honey flow starts all the hive's energy is put into honey gathering. There is nothing to be gained in opening up broodnests now of hives in normal condition.

The Christmas Season will not be so far away by the time this issue of the "N.Z. Beekeeper" reaches you.

"Skep" takes this opportunity of wishing you all a Merry Christmas, with good honey crops, Happiness and Prosperity for the New Year.



GROUP AT THE TIMARU INSTRUCTION COURSE

Photo by courtesy of Langwood Studio, Timaru

NOTES FROM TIMARU

A Valuable Service

Any doubts about the value to the beekeeping industry of the work of the Horticulture Division would have been quickly dispelled at the Timaru Course. There was ample evidence of the technical efficiency of the apiary staff under Superintendent T. S. Winter, but what created an even greater impression was their obvious sincerity and singleness of purpose in promoting the interests of beekeepers. Commercial honey production in New Zealand has now been brought to a fairly high level of efficiency and would probably bear comparison with beekeeping in any part of the world. For this state of affairs the Department of Agriculture deserves a substantial share of the credit.

Package Bees

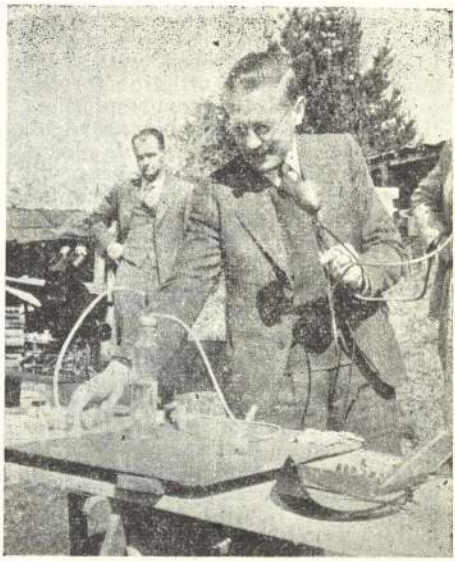
Air transport is proving very satisfactory for package bees, says Mr I. W. Forster. The main precautions to be taken are, first, that the packages be stowed in the cool rear compartment (which is the normal procedure) and, second, that the beekeeper meet the plane at the airport. Judging by the trials which have been held so far it appears that the two-pound packages may be at least as profitable as the three-pound units.

Artificial Insemination

Mr T. Palmer-Jones described in some detail the process of artificial insemination of queens and the general plan of breeding to build up improved strains of bees. The actual technique of insemination presents no great difficulty at Wallaceville, but the work of testing and recording the value of the various crosses and carrying out a long-term breeding project is beyond the capacity of the men and resources available. It is considered that such a programme would seriously interfere with other avenues of research and for this reason the work on artificial insemination is being discontinued in the meantime.

A Honeyhouse

Two carloads of visitors made a brief call at the home apiary of Mr H. Cloake at Fairview, four miles from town. On arriving they found Harry emerging from the milking shed with two brimming pails of milk. The other component of this land of plenty was found in the honeyhouse, one of South Canterbury's many efficient extracting and packing units. An unexpected feature is the four-frame extractor. Small, but effective, it has been known to extract a ton of honey in two hours. But Harry thinks this must be about the absolute maximum for a machine of this size.



Mr T. Palmer-Jones, Research Officer at Wallaceville

Photo by courtesy of Langwood Studio, Timaru

One thing about this outfit which aroused the secret admiration of the visitors was the easy and powerful physique of the proprietor. He is one of the fortunate few who don't realise that producing honey is hard work. As a matter of interest, Harry left the police force a few years ago to take up beekeeping in his father's footsteps. The change from Wellington pavements to Fairview pastorale is one which he is not likely

to regret.

Ventilation

Sometimes a hole is bored in each nuke box and covered with wire gauze to provide ventilation for the bees. Mr T. E. Pearson emphasises that the gauze should be tacked on the inside of the box. If it is placed on the outside the confined bees will crowd into the hole and block the ventilation altogether.

Drone Eggs

Can queens be produced from drone eggs? The answer is no, they can be produced only from fertilised eggs, i.e., female eggs. But apparently the eggs can be fertilised either naturally by the queen or artificially after the eggs have been laid. Considerable evidence has been produced to show that semen from the drone can be applied manually to drone eggs. In this way they can be effectively fertilised and will then mature as either queen or worker bees.

The Office

A feature at the apiary of Walter Watson and Co. is the office—a comfortable, spacious, sunny, informal and hospital place. Possibly Jack and Harry really do some work there at times but we must say it looks like a grand place for relaxation.

Mr H. Cloake, President South Canterbury Branch

Photo by courtesy of Langwood Studio, Timaru

Equipment

If there is an easy way of producing honey it is certain that we will find it eventually. At any rate there was plenty of evidence at Timaru to show that we are still trying. Mechanical hoists, compressed-air lifters, trolleys, barrows, pumps, propellors, and a bewildering array of honeyhouse equipment—nothing to do but keep the machinery in order. Baby nukes, dry sugar, paper bags, requeening without dequeening; no doubt we must move with the times but a few beekeepers think there must be a catch in it somewhere.

Hospitality

The South Canterbury Branch is to be commended for its work in co-operating with the Division in arranging the supporting programme. The work of President H. Cloake and Secretary R. Davidson and the generous assistance of Messrs J. Watson and H. Knibb, and the hospitality of the Branch were greatly appreciated by visiting beekeepers.

Entertainment

A lull in the programme at the film evening was turned to good account when the Chairman called on Mr and Mrs Ivor Forster to entertain. The two polished items brought resounding applause; who knows what talent may lie hidden among the Apiary Instructors?

Profundities

Mr R. S. Walsh (believe it or not): A sample of honey won't granulate as long as it remains liquid.

Mr H. Cloake (describing the route to the Field Day): After entering Geraldine you take the first decent sort of a turn-off to the left. (What sort of a place is this Geraldine?)

Mr J. W. Fraser (discussing honeyhouse regulations): I don't think we should soft-pedal this matter and crayfish away from it altogether. (Set your mind at rest, Jack. So far we haven't seen any beekeepers performing this particular feat.)

WILD HONEYBEES AND DISEASE

It has been widely held that wild honeybees are a menace to beekeeping because they help to spread disease, especially foul brood; some beekeepers would like to see all wild colonies destroyed. On the other hand, it is frequently claimed that wild colonies are remarkably free from disease. Unfortunately such reports generally lack sufficient detail to enable any general conclusions to be drawn. It is important to clarify this evidence, in order to discover what action should be taken by beekeepers, and also because of its bearing on problems of immunity and of propagation of disease.

The Bee Research Association therefore offers to act as a clearing house for evidence on this question. and invited beekeepers in all countries who have made observations bearing on the subject to pool their information, so that the evidence may be studied and an authoritative report prepared. Details of evidence already published will be welcomed, but it is hoped that beekeeping instructors, disease inspectors, and individual beekeepers who have made observations, will report their own findings and comments, whether or not these have previously been published. Readers who know anyone with useful evidence are requested to ask them for their cooperation.

It is important to distinguish between (a) districts remote from organised beekeeping in which wild bees have been established for a number of years, and (b) districts containing apiaries, in which swarms straying from them have "gone wild," and where contact is likely between the wild bees and those owned by beekeepers.

Information is required as to the kind of bee, the district, the nature of the inspection made, the extent of the observations, and the extent and nature of disease experienced by beekeepers in the area.

All information should be sent to Mr E. B. Wedmore, C.B.E., c/o. Bee Research Association, 55 Newland Park, Hull, Yorkshire, England.

WASP HABITS

The following information may be of interest to South Island readers now that the wasp has appeared in Nelson and Canterbury. It is from the report of a meeting of the Far North Branch which was addressed by Messrs D. Roberts and C. R. Paterson of the Department of Agriculture.

They gave methods of destroying wasp nests, recommending that where possible it should be done at night when all wasps are in the nest.

One method is by pouring petrol or diesel fuel in the nest and blocking the flight hole. This method is more suitable for nests which are below the level of the flight hole.

Another is by the use of chemicals such as D.D.T. or by "Fumite" or "Gammexane" which are lit with a match and dropped in the nest. These two last give off a dense smoke which will kill the wasps.

Young queens of the species Vespula Germanica are raised in autumn, and after mating hibernate singly or in groups in dark sheltered corners. With the exception of the newly emerged young queen, all the rest of the community die in autumn and the old nests are abandoned, except in a small percentage of cases where nests remain active throughout the winter. It is the inhabitants of these over-wintered nests that cause a considerable amount of concern to beekeepers.

Nests are begun in spring by the queen in such places as cavities in dry banks. As the worker wasps develop the queen is relieved of all her duties except egg laying and the worker wasps excavate to provide adequate room, dumping spoil well away from the entrance.

Throughout spring and early summer wasps feed almost exclusively on other insects, but by February there are usually more workers than necessary to maintain the nest. At this time, and until late in autumn before the workers, males and the old queen die, these wasps, because of their fondness for sweets including jam and ripe fruit juice, become a great nuisance to the housewife,

orchardist and beekeeper.

As each nest undestroyed may produce hundreds of queens in autumn the following places may be searched for hibernating queens:—

Under loose bark on semi-decayed trees. In 1948 round Hamilton thousands of queen wasps were discovered in such places.

Under sacks hanging on a fence or piles of sacks in a shed.

Under tile roofs or between roofing iron and sarking.

Under stack covers.

In coats or clothing hanging up in open sheds.

Under piles of stacked timber.

Queens can be caught easily during hibernation. When flying round in spring they can be knocked down with a fly swat or tennis racket.

The queen wasp has distinctive markings of black on bright yellow body. There is a broad sharp band of black below the waist and five or six distinct round dots of black at even intervals on each side of the back.

DDT NOT GUILTY

The "N.Z. Journal of Science and Technology" of August 1954, publishes a 15-page article by T. Palmer-Jones and others associated with him, the subject discussed being the effect on honey bees of DDT plus superphosphate applied as a dust to white clover pasture. The article includes a detailed account of experiments carried out in Canterbury last summer and the main points are given in the following summary:—

"DDT plus superphosphate was dusted over 12 acres of white clover pasture at the rate of 2lb. of 100% p.p.i. DDT per acre. This mixture was applied in the manner recommended for grass grub control.

"It was established by marking and counting, that bees from a nearby experimental apiary were collecting nectar extensively from the dusted area.

"Very definite evidence was obtained that the DDT repelled bees for some days after application. Field bees collected from the dusted clover flowers did not show a high mortality and no adverse effects on the hives were observed.

"It is concluded that such dusting would cause only negligible losses of bees in neighbouring apiaries."

WORLD NEWS

Australia

At a poll taken on September 28th Australian beekeepers rejected the proposed honey marketing scheme to be operated on a Commonwealth basis. Queensland and South Australia were the only States in which a majority favoured the scheme.

Royal Jelly

The possible value of royal jelly in medicine is at present claiming the attention of American beekeepers. In a recent article in "Gleanings," Mr R. B. Wilson mentions that royal jelly has been used by physicians in certain cases and he describes some of the impressive claims which have been made for it in the treatment of human ailments.

No authoritative pronouncement has yet been made on the value of royal jelly, but it is now reported that a group of scientists at Cornell University is undertaking an informal programme of exploratory research.

SELLING HONEY

Drawing a distinction between selling honey and marketing honey, Mr J. W. Fraser in his address at the Geraldine Field Day set out to discuss methods of presenting honey, and the idea of honey, to the public. To impress the consumer it is not always necessary to use high-pressure salesmanship; indeed the real results accrue from those general impression of beekeeping, beekeepers and honey which are registered unconsciously in the mind.

Mr Fraser, whose vocabulary never fails, described the honeyhouse which exists in the minds of many laymen—"a ramshackle old shed, none too clean or well-lit, filled with a heterogeneous collection of boxes, beeswax, old tins and other tools of trade, and somewhere in the midst

of this a vat of honey from which the bees and wax have been more or less strained." Actually, said Mr Fraser, the beekeeper of to-day is becoming an efficient business man, packing and processing a wholesome food in modern hygienic premises. We should therefore encourage visitors at the honeyhouse and take care that the conditions there will make an attractive picture.

As a business man the beekeeper should know his product, and he should know the price of it. Never abuse your neighbour's pack—you may damage the name of all honey—but concentrate your efforts upon your own product. Remember that you are rendering a service to the consumer and this service is not complete unless you can offer consistent quality and continuity of supply.

To sum up, the quality of the product must be right, and the property, and person, and technique of the producer must leave a pleasing impression. When these conditions are in evidence the housewife will use more honey and she will buy it with confidence. Merely canvassing for orders is not selling honey.

SCIENCE AND BEES

The hobby of a British Broadcasting Corporation engineer, Mr Edward Woods, may double Britain's output of honey. With the aid of a tiny microphone and other equipment, Mr Woods listens in to bees, and he thinks that by interpreting certain significant sounds made by the bees he can persuade them to work harder.

He also thinks that beekeepers will be able to keep four times as many colonies for the same amount of labour.

Mr Woods' invention, called an apidicator, was on view at the exhibition of the Physical Society in London. It is a neat contrivance, rather like a small radio.

Mr Woods explains that it has been found that the sounds in a hive indicate conditions within the colony, such as the imminence of swarming and the health of the queen.

"Until now this information could be obtained only by dismantling the whole hive, with the subsequent loss of honey," he explains. "With the apidicator I can examine 50 colonies in 10 minutes, a task which would normally take a man about three hours."

SELECTING STRAINS

There is a theory that in any country the native bees will be found the most satisfactory, said Mr I. W. Forster at Timaru. New Zealand, of course, has not native honeybees, but in all countries modern conditions have altered environments to such an extent that the theory does not always hold good. The Italian bee is considered most suitable for New Zealand conditions.

Even within the Italian race there are distinct variations between the strains which have been developed. It is therefore important that the honey producer should keep a good strain. The food requirements of a colony and the working costs of the beekeeper in tending it are fairly constant, and it can be shown that a 10 per cent. increase above average production, as a result of using a productive strain, can mean as much as a 50 per cent. increase in the net return to the beekeeper.

Mr Forster discussed the factors which should be considered in selecting breeding queens. These are many and varied, but in the long view the value of a strain is judged by the characteristics directly or indirectly affecting production.

A common breeding practice is to breed from the queens of those colonies showing the desired characteristics. Unfortunately the prepotency of these queens, or their power of transmitting hereditary qualities, is not always apparent. It is therefore desirable to breed from several good queens and to retain the one in whose progeny the required traits are uniformly fixed. New blood can be brought in for comparison and careful improvement. Selection is therefore a continuous and exacting process.

Today there is a trend towards specialisation, with queen breeders

established in favourable localities. But careful selection by the beekeeper in touch with commercial production is always desirable.

Reflections
. . . from the Editor's Desk

Ancient Honey

The magazine "Time" of 6th September, 1954, tells of the work of Professor P. Sestieri in unearthing the ancient city of Paestum—the City of Roses—near Naples. The workers broke into a "sacred precinct" and found a small hut-shaped temple. "The interior walls were of stucco; on the floor were a rust-corroded iron bedstead and a set of ornate, gilded bronze water jars. Each was filled with an amber-coloured, resin-like substance: solidified honey. Presumably distilled from the nectar of Paestum's famed roses, the 2,500-year-old honey was the classic sacrifice to Hera, wife of Zeus and the goddess of fertility. The temple was probably devoted to her; Hera's image was laid to rest on the bedstead each night."

Possibly it is true that the resin-like substance is actually solidified honey but it may be doubted whether it was "distilled from the nectar of Paestum's famed roses."

Acacia Honey

Talking of honey sources, are there any of our Otago readers with comments to offer on the following item from the "Otago Daily Times" of 25/10/54?

"Behind the presentation of an acacia garden chair to Mr Philip Barling, of Glenfalloch, on Saturday by Mr Richard St. Barbe Baker, the noted authority on trees, there lies more than the usual sentiment relating to a gift.

"Mr Baker brought two of these chairs to New Zealand, one of which he gave to the Governor-General, Sir Willoughby Norrie, and the other to Mr Barling.

"He brought them, he told a gathering of school children at Glenfalloch, to emphasise the importance of planting acacia trees in the Dominion.

"Mentioning that the acacia was very rich in nectar, he said that this came at a time between the clovers and was very valuable for the bees, since the nectar of acacia produced a pure white honey. Where they had been planted in the Balkans to stop the erosion on the hillside, an extensive industry had been built up in the export of honey from the acacia.

"Many farmers in New Zealand had asked him his advice about hedges, Mr Baker said, and he had replied that the acacia not only made a good standard tree, but made an impregnable hedge.

"He would like to see the robinia acacia planted round all the fields in the country. These trees would improve the crops and help to lift the water table. They were more durable in the ground than any tree he knew, said Mr Baker."

Fruitgrowing

Hawkes Bay beekeepers have a particular connection with their fellow primary producers because their bees are of importance in the pollination of the orchards and—by the irony of circumstances—their bees also are susceptable to poisonous orchard sprays. It is pleasing to find a harmonious relationship between beekeepers and fruitgrowers, based on the educational work of the Horticulture Division and the publicity provided by the local press. In a recent issue of the "Herald-Tribune," Mr T. Conway, senior horticulture instructor, discusses the value of bees as pollinators and the precautions which should be taken to protect them. The Horticulture Division also advertises, at the appropriate time, the provisions of the Apiaries Act as they apply to spraying operations, indicating how the danger of poisoning can be avoided. In the final analysis it is co-operation that will

solve the spray problem. Given the understanding, a community of people should have enough tolerance and goodwill to get along together.

The Sunny North

The late Mr R. Stewart had a farm near Whangarei where he often went in the winter time, probably with the view of starting a queen-rearing establishment there. While Mr Stewart was up there he would engage labour to clear the bush from the property.

We recall the contention of the late Mr G. Swanson of Waikaka Valley that bees bred for a number of years in a cold climate, where the summers are comparatively short, are superior to bees bred in a warm climate. Perhaps Mr Stewart had in mind the comprehensive plan of selecting his bees in the southern climate and reproducing them under the favourable conditions in the sunny north. What are the thoughts of our readers on the matter?

Weather Forecast

Some people believe that each year the New Zealand summer resembles the season just concluded in the Old Country. Why our summer should follow theirs, instead of preceding it, is not made clear; but in any case we think the weather is too fickle to give us such a reliable guide as to its intentions.

At the risk of causing undue pessimism in this particular school of weather prophets we append a report of the recent British summer, followed by a comparable statement

from the United States:

"The Scottish Beekeeper," September, 1954: "Beekeepers are for ever hopeful that the rain clouds will pass and that the sun will shine through. Alas for their hopes, this lamentable 1954 season. We have yet to hear of a single district in the British Isles where there is even a slight hope of surplus honey."

"Gleanings in Bee Culture," September, 1954: "In the drought areas of the United States the honey crop is reported to range from poor to a disastrous failure." A map shows that the drought region extends over almost half the country.

Honey Cornflake Muffins

One-third cup honey, 1 egg, 1 cup milk, 2 cups flour, 4 teaspoons baking powder, ½ teaspoon salt, 2 cups corn flakes, ¼ cup butter. Cream butter and honey and add well-beaten egg, then milk and flour sifted with baking powder and salt, and lastly the corn flakes. Bake in small-sized greased muffin tins approximately 20 minutes (400 deg.).

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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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CONTENTS

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