THE NEW ZEALAND BEEKEEPER

NOVEMBER 1963

THE ROBBER MEETS HIS FATE

(Story inside back cover)

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THE NEW ZEALAND BEEKEEPER

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CARRYING ON THE GOOD WORK

FOLLOWING in another man's footsteps or occupying his editorial chair is certainly no sinecure—especially when the predecessor made such a success of his work and for such a long period of years.

Mr John McFadzien did a great deal to assist the beekeepers of New Zealand, and rightfully made a large number of friends from those engaged in the industry on a commercial basis, as well as the backyarder and hobbyist.

All will sincerely wish him well on relinquishing his position as Editor of the "N.Z. Beekeeper" and in his choice of work to help his fellow men in Hawkes Bay. John will continue to retain his interest in the industry and his advice and help will most certainly be sought long after this issue of the Journal has been "put to bed."

Help Wanted

The initial stages for a newcomer are always the most difficult, whether it be as a new boy at school, a junior in an office, or fidgeting in the editor's chair. It is the crucial time when assistance is the most needed and appreciated by "the new boy," whatever the field of activity may be.

Here then, is an appeal to everyone who can contribute news, facts and information of interest to beekeepers to share their knowledge by sending material for publication in the February issue of this Journal.

Branch secretaries in particular are asked to ensure that reports of meetings, field days and other activities are sent in, even if in brief detail or note form, and they will be gratefully received.

Anecdotes from bygone days, amusing stories that have happened to others, short cuts in apiary management, etc., all make good "copy" and will be enjoyed by fellow readers.

Here is a story which earned the writer an imposing title and which was bestowed gratuitously and inaccurately by a London daily newspaper several years ago.

"The Man Scotland Yard Sends for When There is Trouble with the Bees" said the headline in a story about a swarm of bees and their capture in the heart of London's famed West End.

It is certainly unusual for a swarm to settle in Oxford Street, and for them to cluster inside a high pressure gas lamp suspended over the middle of the roadway was sufficient cause for traffic chaos, and no little concern to lunch time shoppers. The continuous stream of double decker buses passing in close proximity to the swarm did nothing to improve the bees' temper, and members of the constabulary and sundry onlookers failed to enjoy the novelty of being stung.

S.O.S.

At this stage a call was made to the emergency telephone number at Whitehall 1212—a service which provides immediate and priority connexion to the Information Room at Scotland Yard —and an urgent request made for something constructive to be done in removing the nuisance from London's midst.

A police inspector on duty at Scotland Yard, knowing of the writer's hobby as an amateur beekeeper, telephoned to the office and asked if assistance could be given.

Anxious and willing to help, but nevertheless acutely conscious of the truism that "fools rush in where angels fear to tread," a taxi was taken to the scene of the commotion and to decide how to persuade an angry, irritated swarm to enter a small and inadequate cardboard box.

There, 20 feet above the centre of one of the busiest roads in the world was the gas lamp, and on the inside of the lamp was the swarm.

Helpful suggestions of firemen's escape ladders were discussed and discarded, and eventually a representative of the local authority was prevailed upon to bring an essential winch key to wind down the lamp to the centre of the road.

With typical bureaucratic ingenuity, the official arrived armed with a key, but unfortunately of the wrong size, thus necessitating a return journey to the council yard for a correctly sized substitute.

Meantime, buses and traffic continued to pass by, the crowd of onlookers and police continued to grow and the bees became progressively cross.

A mental picture insisted on being formed in which a badly stung amateur beekeeper was attempting to escape through the crowd from the fury of the bees. Indeed, imagination became uppermost almost to the point of deciding that discretion was indeed the better part of valor, and that a hasty if undignified retreat would be expedient before it was too late.

Arrival of the substitute winding gear dictated the necessity for action, tempered with an urgent request to lower the lamp to handling height as gently as possible, and with a minimum of jerks and jars.

With Oxford Street traffic halted by the arms of the law, and under the cynical and critical gaze of onlookers and office workers, the lamp was lowered.

A clean but admittedly apprehensive hand was thrust into the inside of the lamp glass, the bees hurriedly but gently scooped out and into a cardboard box, and a hastily positioned lid placed on top.

With suitable ventilation holes bored by the point of a pencil, the bees were taken home by train later in the day to be successfully hived in the quieter and more conventional atmosphere of a country garden.

Enthusiasts

For several summers afterwards, calls were made by the police for assistance, and there was considerable speculation as to the source from which swarms would emanate in such a densely populated area.

Enquiries eventually proved that hives were kept at the Royal Zoological Gardens, adjacent to Regent's Park, and that one enthusiast was known to keep two colonies on the top of a pent house in Park Lane, high above the roofs and traffic close to Hyde Park.

One fact for certain would be that the yield of surplus would be negligible if any, and the probability that the stocks would have to be fed to survive the winter. It is a fact, too, that once a man becomes imbued with bees and their management, that a great deal of adverse circumstance will be overcome to continue in practice!

APIARISTS must be "Jacks of all Trades"

Conciliation Commissioner decides existing Agricultural Employees Award is satisfactory for bee-keeping industry.

A successful apiarist must be a "Jack-of-all-trades and master of the lot", for such are the diversity of his operations that to specialise in one small sphere would be to fail in another of equal importance.

Similarly, an employee capable of driving the van and wielding a brush but incapable of knocking in straight the proverbial nail would be a distinct liability instead of an asset.

In the recent decision of the Conciliation Commissioner in the dispute between the New Zealand (except Northern, Westland and Otago and Southland) Food Processing, Chemical and Related Products Factory Employees' Industrial Union of Workers as appellants, and various food packers and honey producers as respondents, recognition was given to the situation where master and man must turn their hands to a number of skills.

In submissions made by the General Secretary of the National Beekeepers' Association of N.Z. Inc., it was pointed out that there was an apparent lack of knowledge and appreciation by the appellant union of the true nature of an apiarist's business in relation to the production and packaging of honey and the terms and conditions upon which staff are engaged, and that there was no known instance of an apiarist in New Zealand employing staff solely for the purpose of processing and packaging.

Principal duties of staff are the maintenance of equipment, including the manufacture of replacements for hives, frames, foundation, etc., which entails knowledge of woodworking and carpentry. The inspection and maintenance of bee colonies, with seasonal attention to feeding, checking for disease, queen breeding, the culturing of nucleii, the introduction of package bees etc., investigation of nectar sources and shifting apiaries to new sites is all entailed in practical bee-keeping in addition to the harvesting of honey, extraction from the comb and its blending and packaging in bulk or retail containers.

Actual "processing" and packing of honey involves a limited period of the year, the remainder of the time being taken up in a multitude of other duties including such divergent occupations as painter, motor and mechanical engineer, van driver, etc. In fact, for the purposes of motor vehicle licensing, apiarists are regarded as farmers.

Following an effort to require bee-keepers' employees to be members of the appellant union three years ago, the Labour Department decided that the classification of beekeepers' employees as workers within the definition of the appellant union's award was neither justified nor prudent.

The decision of the Conciliation Commissioner to delete beekeepers from the list of respondents reinforces this view, and once again in effect means that employees of apiarists are satisfactorily covered under the Agricultural etc. Employees' award.

MAILING LIST

The mailing list for "The New Zealand Beekeeper" is in the course of revision, and reader's co-operation is requested in checking that their name and address is correctly shown on the wrapper.

In the event of any inaccuracy, please return the wrapper, duly corrected, to the Editor at 78a Moncks Spur, Redcliffs, Christchurch 8, as soon as possible so that amendments may be made and our records brought up to date.

It will also be very greatly appreciated if you know or hear of any member of your branch whose name has not been added to our mailing list, and will advise the Editor of the omission. Notification will receive prompt attention.

H.M.A. ELECTION RESULT

One sitting member and a new nominee were elected as Producers' Representatives to the Honey Marketing Authority following the ballot declaration on September 13.

Topping the poll was Mr Percy Berry, of Havelock North, with 1324 votes, followed by the sitting member, Mr James Richard Barber, of Pio Pio, with 1192 votes.

Mr Percy Berry is New Zealand's largest beekeeper, with apiaries totalling 6500 hives and extending from Hawkes Bay to Taupo. In addition to being the largest honey producer he is also a honey packer. In speeches at Conference in July last he gained for himself a reputation as a forceful and tactical speaker with an enviable knowledge of the industry and its attendant problems, and was elected to the Executive of the National Beekeepers' Association.

Mr James Barber, the sitting member to regain election, is the Immediate Past President of the Association, and who has served the Executive and the industry for a number of years. He has gained the respect and admiration of his colleagues as a man with the courage of his own convictions and the ability to express them.

The good wishes of the industry will go with the two Producer Representatives to the Authority. Published below is the official notification from the Returning Officer of the election results:—

NEW ZEALAND DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

HONEY MARKETING AUTHORITY ELECTIONS, 1963

Notification of Result of Election for Two Producers' Representatives

The valid votes cast for each candidate at the above election were:—

BARBER, James Richard	1192
BERRY, Percy	1324
FRASER, John William	1176
POOLE, Russell Frederick	356

I therefore declare the said Percy Berry and James Richard Barber duly elected.

P. J. McVERRY,
Returning Officer.
September 13, 1963

Aid to Queen Insemination?

The British firm of Accles and Pollock Ltd., Birmingham, have perfected a nickel seamless tube with a bore smaller than one-twentieth of the diameter of a human hair, measuring .000515in. and its bore .00013 in.

Whilst no general commercial application is claimed for such a minute tube, the makers derived great satisfaction in perfecting the tube-making technique, and pointed out that such a small bore could be used for the artificial insemination of queen bees, and for the inoculation of flies in research work for tropical diseases.

The fact that Accles and Pollock Ltd. enjoy their mastery of tube making is evidenced by the fact that a few years ago an American company produced what was claimed to be the smallest tube in the world. Accles and Pollock acquired the American specimen—and returned it with one of their own tubes threaded inside it!

Pictured here (from left) are Mr. George Gumbrell, Chairman of the New Zealand Honey Marketing Authority, Mr. Harry Cloake, National President of the Association, Mr. W. B. Bray, doyen of the Canterbury branch holding the observation hive, and Mr. David Penrose, branch chairman at the Field Day held at Tai Tapu.

How to get

PROFITABLE CROPS OF HONEY

By Gene Hinslade, Seattle, Washington

The author is in his eighty-second year with a lifetime of experience with bees, and his father was a commercial apiarist. . Mr. Hinsdale claims to have perfected a simple arrangement to permit four-queen compacts so that fourteen deep hive bodies are less than 5ft high, and there is no dismantling to inspect the brood nests.

Primitive man took honey from the bees' nests wherever he found them. Thousands of years later, after the invention of tools, he was able to saw out a section of the tree with the bees and take it home as a hive. Then it was found the bees would work happily in any box that gave them protection from the weather. There were no frames and the bees arranged their combs every way, but on closer observation there seems to be a decided tendency to follow the earth's magnetic lines—that is, not true north and south, but pointing to the magnetic poles.

Where wood was scarce many substitutes were used. Straw was twisted into ropes and formed "skeps" in Northern Europe. Clay, baked or unbaked, in cylinders, large pots, or jugs, formed the hives in Egypt, South America, the Middle and Far East.

Langstroth First

Frames were a complete failure until Langstroth discovered that bees would not fasten combs together if there were a complete "bee-space" around them.

Then followed great activity in inventing and patenting hives in many sizes, shapes, and hoped for results. Finally the eight frame Langstroth became the favourite and bees were wintered in a single hive-body. Later the 10 frame was found to be better and the double brood chamber is almost universal with progressive beekeepers today.

Along with the advancement in hives went an advancement in management. At first the bees were placed in the box-hive or "gum" (from the gum trees which were often hollow and used as hives) and allowed to take care of themselves. Study showed that if we worked in harmony with the bee's natural instincts, we could "manage" them, to obtain greater surplus, better wintering, more gentleness, and all the things we do with bees. Also, those who made a business of making honey found they must re-queen every year, or at least every other year, to get the best results.

There was a time when men believed that bees behaved according to their own sweet will, and that no one could ever tell what the bees would do or when they would do it. Beekeepers all over the world have puzzled over the problems of bee behaviour and discovered certain things to be fundamental and applicable to all locations and situations. The basic truths of beekeeping are few and simple, but you must know, understand, and apply them before you can get profitable crops of honey! You may get an occasional good crop knowing little of bee behaviour, but no one can have uniformly good crops under varying conditions of season and location, unless you spend some time studying bees and their reactions to the various influences that cause them to behave as they do.

Your location, from the extreme north to the tropics, will present problems of management. The same amount of honey can be stored in six weeks in the north as in six months in the tropics. The north has a short, rapid honey flow. Bees must be at the peak of their strength at a time which varies little from year to year. The bees must make honey during these few weeks of wonderful nectar secretion.

South and North

In the extreme south, as in the tropics, there may be long periods when the secretion of nectar is slow, but the regular colony activities must be maintained. Or there may be dry spells, during which the colony must be kept up to effective working strength until rain brings a blooming period. In the north, such a drought would end

the honey prospects for the year; but in the south you may get a crop from a later flow if you keep your colonies strong until the rains come.

Three Principles

Successful beekeepers recognise **three fundamental principles** that underlie the obtaining of profitable crops of honey!

First: Get each colony to have its full complement of harvesters at the **start** of the blooming period of the principal nectar-producing plants of the locality!

Second: Keep the colony at this strength during the honey flow, not allowing the working force to be divided by uncontrolled swarming!

Third: Keep the colonies strong enough at all other seasons of the year so they can build up again at the right time!

Profitable crops of honey depend on these three rules! **There are no others.**

Let's take a long hard look at this first rule. The big honey flows last from 15 to 35 days. The eggs laid the day the flow starts will become harvesters after the flow is over, so are useless as harvesters for this flow. If you have a flow starting, say December 14, an egg laid on October 5 will have produced a harvester that is about ready to expire from old age. The eggs laid the four weeks following October 5 will give us the force we have at the start of the flow. Whether this force can be called our full complement of harvesters, or a worthless, weak colony depends on several things. Is the queen old or young? Has the temperature been so cold the queen could not expand her broodnest? Is the broodnest still partly filled with last year's honey? Does the queen have first class combs to lay in? Has she enough nurse bees to care for the brood?

After asking these questions, let's find the correct answers. A young queen, good combs, clearing out last year's honey, won't be too hard to do when we realise their importance. To have enough nurse bees we must start the autumn before and go into the winter with enough **young** bees to take care of the first three or four weeks of intensive brood rearing. If there is a likelihood of cold interfering with the expansion of the broodnest, use supplemental heat. Three farthings worth of electricity will produce as much heat as 15 farthings worth of honey used to produce heat by the bees! You must have the heat! Which is cheaper? With heat thermostatically controlled, the broodnest is at the exact temperature required for maximum brood rearing every minute, from the time you start the egg laying until the honey flow starts! This heat, together with stimulative feeding, ample stores, and all the pollen or pollen substitute the bees will take, will insure a colony of 100,000 harvesters plus half as many sealed brood on the day the flow starts. **This colony will give you a profitable crop!** That is, if there is nectar in your bee pasture, and we follow the second rule that says, "Don't allow them to swarm!" Also you will get from 30 to 50 pounds of willow, maple, and dandelion honey that was formerly used for brood rearing!

30,000 'Housemaids'

Research shows that from 25,000 to 30,000 bees are needed to perform what might be called the "household chores" of the hive, so we can see why weak colonies are unable to store much surplus, for such a large proportion of the bees are "housemaids," not harvesters.

A profitable crop of honey is primarily dependent on your location, your "bee pasture." This varies from the coldest parts of the temperate zones to the tropics, and from sea level to the tops of the mountain ranges.

If you cannot change your location to a better one, then you must plan to get every last ounce possible from the nectar available. Hence our first rule. Do some thinking and planning to have the greatest number of harvesters possible in your hives the day and hour the flow **starts!** If you have them two weeks early, they look nice flying around, and you may feel you are ready for the flow when it starts, but these bees have been "boarders" for two weeks, and half of their harvester life span is past! They have been living on your bounty, eating honey instead of adding to your surplus! On the other hand if you have them two weeks late, that much of your honey flow has been "lost" so

far as your bees are concerned. You may have "lost" half your potential crop!

So far we have explored the possibiilties of profitable crops with single queen operation. That is the way most of us handle bees.

There are two ways to insure profitable crops of surplus honey, having "a barrel full of bees" under a single queen, or using the combined egg-laying capacity of more than one queen, to build up a colony of truly magnificent proportions and find our harvest is correspondingly great.

It is not as easy to get a "barrell full of bees" under one queen as it is to have more than one, otherwise all our hives would be in this superior category; but at first thought we feel sure we can get the big force, for, can't we use large numbers of queens, five, seven or 10, say?

Only after we begin to assemble our multi-queen equipment do we find there is a limit to the number of queens we can operate without going over a height of 12 deep hive-bodies. So we have to be satisfied with two queens at a height of 8 to 11 deep hive bodies.

Even this height becomes too much for our patience, with tearing down and building up, required in ordinary practice, so we go back to single queen operation.

Four-Queen Compacts

The extra height and extra work involved is the bottleneck that holds back the idea of multi-queen hives. The writer is a bee hobbiest, in his 82nd year, and for 10 years has been reading, thinking, and experimenting with multi-queen operation.

Finally the answer came to me suddenly. Shall we credit the subconscious?

It seemed all we had to do was to get rid of the unusually high hive, and find some way to avoid all the work spent taking down and putting back the supers to work the broodnests! That is exactly what I have done with the Hinsdale Compact Hive. Fourteen regular deep hive bodies are so compactly arranged (that's where the name "compact" comes from) that they make a stack less than four feet high! They occupy a space less than 3ft by 5½ft! We can use one, two, three, or four queens. As four queens give us the maximum harvest, why use less?

With four queens laying eggs, we can't fail to have a population of stupendous proportions, and they will bring in a surplus crop of equal magnificance!

One-Ton Colonies!

As a sample of what we may expect, let me quote a paragraph from an article by "Propolis Pete" in the June, 1963, issue of "Gleanings in Bee Culture":—

> "I remember reading some years ago about a chap who juggled a hive so that he was actually running a four or five queen colony that was 20 or so stories high. He got something like a **ton of honey** off that one stand. But it could hardly be called one colony, and imagine the work of servicing such a monstrosity."

Perhaps few of us live where there is such a monster flow (I wrote to "Pete" and he said he was not sure but thought it was in South Africa), but no matter where we live or what kind of flow is normal for our district, our four queens should bring in eight times the crop the four queens would have stored if working singly, according to the 15 years of research done by Father Dugat on multi-queen operation!

The real answer to how to get profitable crops of honey is to use compacts!

THE OLD CLUB TIE

The old school tie is no longer the prerogative of Eton, Harrow and the military set and if you are a member of the Yorkshire (England) Bee-keepers' Association, quick social recognition can be established amongst fellow apiarists by sporting the club tie.

The Rose of York (white) is shown against a green ground and a golden bee, with the initials Y.B.K.A. woven into the flower petals.

No details of price are currently available, or whether members were stung.

Reflections . . . . .

from the Editor's Desk

The kind-hearted and open-handed friendship of beekeepers is quite extraordinary, and this humble scribe will always be grateful and mindful of the many expressions of good wishes received from complete strangers since occupying and fidgeting in the editorial chair.

Letters have arrived from all parts of New Zealand and from overseas correspondents with salutations and messages of encouragement, and at beekeepers' meetings complete strangers have soon become new-found friends by the warmth of their greeting.

As mentioned elsewhere, a "new boy" is generally acutely aware of his own lack of specialised knowledge and shortcomings, in particular, the inability to name and know people who have gained for themselves the respect and approbation of their fellow men, the leaders in the commercial world and the hard-working secretaries of the branches and domestic groups.

Thank you all for your patience and kindness; meeting as many of you as possible in the fullness of time is a pleasure to come.

In particular, my very sincere appreciation to those who responded so promptly to the "reminder cards" asking for information from the districts, and for news for commercial men and beginners.

Reports from widely dispersed areas indicate that swarming preparations were the earliest for many years. One of my own hives, left well fed and dry for the winter, was building queen cells and making preparations to be off in mid-September. Prompt dividing took away the fever.

Although the winter has been wet it cannot be said to have been severe, and it is difficult for mere mortals to understand the reason for such behaviour. In England, last winter was the worst since accurate records on weather conditions began, and many beekeepers lost a large proportion of their colonies. Those that survived through favoured or sheltered situations and were stimulated by spring feeding made rapid strides in building up strength, and there, too, comments were soon rife on the early swarming fever.

Perhaps it is easier to understand the reason for early swarming after a particularly severe winter, for the "master mind" of nature knows that natural replacements must be made to compensate for natural losses, but with the comparatively mild weather conditions in New Zealand the reason is obscure.

My grandfather before me was an ardent, if amateur, beekeeper, primarily using his straw skeps to pollinate orchard holdings in the fruit county of Kent.

A piece of old English folk lore which he oft times quoted went like this:—

"A swarm of bees in May
Is worth a load of hay,
A swarm of bees in June
Is worth a silver spoon,
But a swarm of bees in July
Just isn't worth a fly."

Of course, to make sense for this hemisphere, the dates must be transposed by six months. Perhaps someone with a more poetic frame of mind can re-phrase the saying to tally with our own weather seasons.

Thoughts of climatic conditions in England and a comparison with conditions here, raises an interesting point to mind.

Many beekeepers in the United Kingdom use the W.B.C. hive, which is a hive within a hive. Advocates of the design are loud in their praise, and opponents of the outer "lifts" are equally critical of the fact that handling is a double operation. Certainly, there are "fors" and "against" in both arguments.

One fact is, however, crystal clear, and that is that the interior of W.B.C. hives rarely suffer from dampness due to condensation.

Despite the high temperature of the brood nest and the extreme wet and cold on the outside, the frames do not suffer from mould and wet to anything like the same extent as do single-wall hives.

My own particular practice—which was, of course, subject to debate and condemnation by some beekeepers and praise by others—was to leave the top of the frames entirely open, devoid of crown board or mat, once the hive was "put down" for the winter, being simply protected from the weather by the waterproof roof.

Despite far superior climatic conditions, and adequate attempts at ventilation by inserting wire gauze in the crown board, and lifting the roof slightly on blocks to ensure a passage of free-moving air, the winter brood chambers suffer from condensation-induced dampness and resultant mould. Does anyone know the answer?

SELF-HELP in the U.K.

Due to the abnormally bad weather during last winter, and the severe conditions which caused the demise of thousands of hives throughout the British Isles, self-help steps were suggested by the General Secretary of the British Beekeepers' Association.

Some beekeepers lost all of their stocks, whilst others in more favoured areas had only isolated losses, and the sensible suggestion was therefore made that those beekeepers with five or more colonies should make nuclei, each taking a comb from strong colonies and forming five-comb nucleus. Branch secretaries were urged to effect exchanges between donors and recipients and where required, arrange recompense to cover out of pocket expenses.

The British Bee Journal, in commending the scheme to its readers, suggested that every beekeeper with five or more colonies, and everyone who has more than he can comfortably manage, should encourage at least one swarming, to be broken up into nuclei, and that every natural swarm should be given to those who have lost all.

As to whether the scheme was a practical success is not known at the time of writing, but it is refreshing to note that a lead was given by the Association's Secretary on the right lines. "Surely," he said, "we can for once abandon the modern concept that only the Government can help in time of trouble and, instead, follow the concept of our grandparents and help one another . . ."

Wise words indeed, and sound advice which could be profitably followed by others outside our own sphere.

Book Reviews

"INFECTIOUS DISEASES OF THE HONEY BEE"

"INFECTIOUS DISEASES OF THE HONEY BEE," by Dr Leslie Bailey, published by Land Books Ltd, London, is the latest addition to the bookshelf of the scientifically minded beekeeper.

The author has a renowned background, having specialised in entomology at Cambridge University, and since 1951 has been engaged in research work at Rothamstead Experimental Station, Hertfordshire, England, studying micro-organisms which infect honey bees.

Dr Bailey analyses the many infections to which honey bees are prone, and discusses the diseases caused by bacteria, protozoa, fungi, viruses and insect and nematode parasites, etc., and their natural histories are described in detail based on the result of meticulous experiment and observation.

Preventive and curative methods of control are fully considered, and conclusions given.

The work is well illustrated with photographs, micro-photographs, and detailed drawings to assist the reader in his studies, but a working knowledge of biology is essential for assimilation.

"Infectious Diseases of the Honey Bee" is not a book for light weekend reading, neither can it be recommended to the beekeeper who cannot find or will not make sufficient time for diligent study. But for the seriously minded beekeeper anxious to acquire advanced knowledge on a subject of paramount importance to the industry, and to all students of insect pathology, this book will fill a key position in the reference library.

Dr Leslie Bailey is a master of his subject, and in the bibliography at the end of his book, a list of 390 works of reference are detailed.

Published at 25s. in the United Kingdom and available from the publishers or ordered through booksellers in New Zealand, "Infectious Diseases of the Honey Bee" has been added to the titles available from the Association's lending library service.

"APICULTURAL ABSTRACTS" 1963

The current quarterly edition of "Apicultural Abstracts," Summer 1963, published by The Bee Research Association, London, is a mine of interesting information and facts for both the practical beekeeper as well as for the more scientifically minded, and provides a survey of research and technical developments on bees and beekeeping throughout the world.

A total of 449 extracts are published and whilst many of the references provide material for assimilation by scientists and entomologists, much of the material is of absorbing interest to the beekeeper.

Every beekeeper must have fervently wished at some time of his career or hobbyist activity that an antidote had been found for stings on more tender parts of the anatomy. Take comfort in the thought that two scientists in Spokane, Washington, a Messrs R. A. and R. F. E. Stier, have published the results of their findings on desensitisation in allergy to insect stings.

Their paper summarises a questionaire answered by physicians who had treated 125 patients found to be hypersensitive to stings of hymenopterous insects. In most cases a mixed antigen prepared from extracts of the whole bodies of honeybees, wasps, hornets and yellow jackets was used in desensitisation. Dosages varied with individuals.

Among 59 patients stung after treatment began, 43 were afforded "complete," 15 partial, and two no

protection against allergic symptoms. Of 23 patients who had suffered near-fatal reactions from stings and were stung again after treatment, the degree of protection was "complete" for 18, partial for 5, and none for 1.

We can all hope, of course, that none of our near neighbours belong to the unfortunate category of the individual "1".

Rheumatics

Solace to the victims of bee stings that their temporary suffering is well worth while as a curative or preventative treatment for rheumatic complaints, has long been the bee-keeper's stand-by.

Whilst medico-scientific evidence has been provided previously, it is always useful to have an additional ally, in this particular case from Comrade V. A. Pertsulenko, of the Polyclinic in Moscow, where being stung is on the doctor's orders.

In this clinic, 500 patients suffering from inflammation of the joints due to infection, rheumatism, disturbances of metabolism, radiculitis, neuralgia, spondylitis deformans and other causes, were treated with bee venom.

The treatment consisted of 15-20 sessions, starting with one bee sting and increasing every other day to two, bringing the total up to 15-20-30 stings at a sitting, or even more. Most of the patients received 300-500 stings. A break of 1½-2 months was followed by another course of treatment.

Good or satisfactory results were obtained with 70% of the patients. Rheumatic polyarthritis gave the best results; most of the sufferers improved after 150-200 stings. Good results were obtained with metabolic polyarthritis, spondylitis deformans, radiculitis and neuritis. There was no improvement where deformations and anklosis were already present. During and after the treatment, 80% of the patients felt much better, and showed increased productivity, improvements in appetite, and sleep. Most of the patients had shown no improvement from the standard methods of treatment before the start of bee venom treatment.

From Leningrad, U.S.S.R., details are published of work on the world wide problem of diseases, and of treatment given for bacillus alvei and bacillus larvae, with penicillin. Given in a concentration of 900 000 units per 1 of sugar syrup, penicillin was found in laboratory experiments to be bactericidal to B. pluton, and to have bacteriostatic effects on B. alvei and B. larvae. Tests on 267 colonies fed three times at intervals of 7-10 days with 900 000 units per 1-1.5 l. syrup resulted in the recovery of 90% of them.

Royal jelly is the subject for a number of reports of experiments and fact finding, and F. D. Barbieri, B. Leiderman and M. E. Fernandez, of the National University of Argentina, provide interesting data from a scientific point of view and for lovers of tadpoles in particular.

Tadpole Tails

Fresh royal jelly was found to accelerate regeneration and growth in amputated tails of tadpoles, whereas royal jelly preserved for 10-43 days did not have this effect.

On similar lines, A. Bonomi, at the University of Parma, Italy, shows that royal jelly fed to chickens resulted in an increase in weight and that the number of red and white corpuscules was larger in the birds fed on royal jelly.

In this abstract of research and technical development on bees and bee-keeping culled from every corner of the globe, it is pleasing to note that several references are from New Zealand's Department of Agriculture.

The Abstract has been added to the Association's service for loan to readers on application.

HONOUR for RESEARCH WORKER

The eminent research worker in bee behaviour, Professor Karl von Frisch, has been awarded the Swiss-Italian Balzan Foundation Peace Prize for his outstanding contributions to our knowledge, particularly in relation to the field of bee communication.

Professor von Frisch has received world-wide recognition for his work and he is the recipient of recognition from many countries.

Canterbury Branch organises exceptional Field Day and Gives First Public Demonstration in New Zealand of

QUEEN POLE MATING TECHNIQUE

The Canterbury branch of the National Beekeepers' Association of New Zealand held their annual field day at the Tai Tapu Domain on Saturday, October 12.

Weather conditions were perfect, with azure blue sky and no wind, and some 250 members and friends made early appearances from as far apart as the West Coast and well south of Timaru to profit and enjoy the days program.

The President of the Branch, Mr David Penrose, formally welcomed everyone shortly after 10.15 a.m. and mentioned that it was gratifying to see such a good attendance from outside the area as well as from the immediate vicinity. Visitors included Mr. H. Cloake of Timaru, the National President of the Association, Mr. George Gumbrell, chairman of the Honey Marketing Authority, and doyen of Canterbury beekeepers, Mr. W. B. Bray, snr., of Leeston.

Following a brief and unavoidably hurried demonstration by the Apiary Instructor, Mr. L. Griffin, on the recognition of bee diseases, attention was focused on preparations for the high light of the day's events, the prospect of which intrigued both commercial and amateur beekeeper alike.

Every beekeeper knows that under certain ideal and controlled conditions, artificial insemination of a queen bee can be practised with highly satisfactory results, ensuring purity of strain and little risk of loss, but the snag has necessarily been that it is impractical for the ordinary man with little scientific or entomological skill.

It is probably correct that most recipients of the program detailing the Field Day's events were puzzled at the assurance that the first demonstration in New Zealand of pole mating of a queen was to be given.

Some decided that it would be folly to be wise, others kept their own counsel, and the bolder decided to make discreet enquiries from the organisers and thus be just that little wiser than the next man in the crowd, and in possession of some smattering of knowledge to answer or evade pointed questions from the younger generation in attendance.

This writer was amongst those who did not know or had ever heard of the possible procedure, and took steps early in the day to ascertain the facts.

The experiment and demonstration was apparently the result of a recent visit across the Tasman by Mr. Kevin Eckroyd to Australia, during which time he visited a number of commercial apiaries.

At Brisbane he was assured by his host that the fertilising of queens in that particular apiary was carried out by pole mating.

No Joke

Not unnaturally, and being fully aware of the Australian's love of a joke and sense of humour, Kevin decided that his leg was being well and truly pulled, and it took considerable assurance and persuasion by the host that he was, in fact, in earnest.

As proof of his integrity and good intentions, an immediate offer was made to stage a demonstration of pole mating, and Kevin was shown the technique involved.

Briefly, the procedure is for virgin queens at the right stage for mating to be tethered to a piece of very thin nylon or cotton thread at the thorax by the use of a quick drying lacquer. The other end of the thread is then tied to a line suspended from two poles similar to a clothes line, and the willing or unwilling queens are hoisted aloft for the attention of obliging drones. According to the Australian reports, the drones from the home apiary are ever watchful and resourceful, with the result that purity of strain is assured and unwanted and delinquent intruders from outer areas are prevented from perverting the master race.

That, at least, is the Australian picture, since reported in an Australian bee magazine and verified by our own hard working and respected member of the Canterbury Branch.

Of necessity, circumstances in a public place of a township Domain are different from the privacy of a home apiary, as will be well understood, and production of a number of queens of the right age and assured virgins is not the simplest of tasks, neither is it easy to induce indolent drones to appear at the right time and the right place.

T.V. Coverage

Perhaps it was appropriate that the T.V. camera man covering the activities of the Field Day was a patient and polite French national, for the obvious and first essential for the demonstration was to "cherchez la femme".

The President of the branch, Mr. David Penrose, had reared and brought with him two virgin queens of suitable age, but it was not practical to provide a half dozen on a horizontal line for the purpose of the experiment, and a compromise arrangement was therefore made.

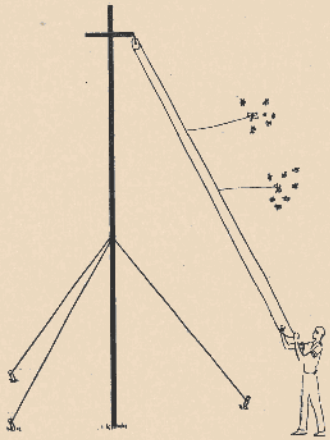
A steel pole of steam barrel was erected and affixed to the upright of a conveniently situated goal post, and at the top of the pole had been placed a free running pulley and endless rope loop, similar to the halyard employed for flag raising or ceremonial occasions.

At the appointed time, therefore, David closeted himself with an assistant and T.V. cameraman inside his car, to delicately apply sufficient quick drying lacquer to the queen's thorax, and to glue into position the frayed ends of the restraining thread.

The free end of the thread was tied securely to the running "hawser," and the first queen hoisted gently aloft, followed by her sister at a space of a few feet until the uppermost was some thirty to forty feet above ground level.

Viewed through powerful field glasses, the queens appeared to fly freely and perhaps hopefully for the first few minutes of their tethered flight, but despite the strenuous efforts of their wing beats did not appear to succeed in getting very far, or in inducing possible mates to evince an interest in their apis charms.

Speculation soon became rife in an attempt to account for the absence of suitors. Someone was heard to suggest that perhaps the male of the specie objected to the public interest in their affairs, and another that with the general improvement in education, realisation had dawned as to the ultimate result of untimely death. A third and more probable theory put forward was that the few drones in the vicinity could easily be accounted for by the fact that the two nearby hives on which the apiary instructor had given his demonstration, had only been on their present site for two days.



The tethered Queens flying from the halyard

Whatever the reason, attention by the assembled crowd with field glasses, camera lenses and even a telescope, should have been sufficient to compensate the most self conscious queen's ego for the apparent lack of interest by passing swains.

Viewed through the glasses at this stage, some seven minutes after hoisting, both queens appeared to be losing interest in the proceedings and their wing beats were becoming fainter. An interesting, but possibly ill-informed comment was that the queens were beginning to suffer from sun-stroke and heat exhaustion, but it could have been true in view of the cloudless sky.

It was at this depressing stage that everyone's hopes were raised. Out of the blue and seemingly from nowhere came the unmistakable flying form of a drone. Following several reconnaisance flights to obtain closer appraisals of the queenly offering, and succeeding in raising the hopes of the assembled onlookers, the drone took off in a northerly direction and was lost from view.

Several minutes later it was noticed that a number of drones were evincing

unusual interest in several bystanders, and since hope springs eternal in the human breast, the President obligingly brought down the two queens to a lower level nearer to the ground. Unfortunately, the drones continued to prefer human company, and it was patently obvious that the tired, if not exhausted, queens were longing to be replaced in their cages to be fed by their willing attendants.

Damage to Queen?

The restraining thread having been severed as closely as possible, the queens were safely returned, and it is Mr Penrose's intention to watch carefully to see if any damage results from the tethering, and if subsequent mating is satisfactory.

It was a most interesting and thought-provoking experiment, and one which will most certainly be tried by other branches at forthcoming field days. As to whether the practice is worth while, and if the disadvantages outweight the advantages, remains to be seen. Whatever the outcome, the Canterbury Branch are to be congratulated on their initiative and enterprise in being the first in New Zealand to publicly attempt the demonstration. May they have better luck next time.

After the luncheon adjournment, Mr. David Penrose gave a thoroughly practical and instructive demonstration of restoring a neglected hive to good heart again. It was an inspiration, particularly to the backyarders and hobbyists, to see his manipulation of the frames and the speed in which he cleaned them and restored them into position in new boxes.

A new piece of equipment shown for the first time in Canterbury was a simple ratchet hive strapper, by means of which hives can be easily and safely secured for migratory beekeeping. The device has great practical merit in that it is relatively cheap, easy to use, and substantially made in heavy gauge metal.

Following the practical work of the day, an auction was held of surplus equipment which included strainers, extractors, honey tanks, etc., 10% of the proceeds being deducted for branch funds.

This field day was exceptionally well organised, had perfect weather conditions, and was most instructional to all who attended.

ADVERTISEMENT

REPORT TO HONEY MARKETING AUTHORITY ELECTORS BY P. BERRY

While the Chairman's report is the appropriate source of general information from the Authority, I am of course directly responsible to the electors on the following issue of principle on which I was elected.

"The Honey Marketing Authority must exercise its authority and accept its responsibilities instead of just handing to a commission agent a monopoly of our overseas trading. I regard this as an issue of principle and would ask electors to regard any vote cast in my favour as a clear indication to me and to the Authority that termination of the Contract is desired."

Considerable argument and activity centred round this issue has produced the following results: The terms of the Agreement can now be made available to the Beekeeping Industry by the Manager or members of the H.M.A. The Agent's acceptance of this procedure made it unnecessary to put into effect a Resolution that the issue would be settled by arbitration between the Chairman and myself and a recognised legal authority acceptable to us both. I have refused to discuss the Agreement in committee and I accordingly left the meeting before the reading of a private and confidential letter from Col. Kimpton addressed to the Chairman, as I did not wish to receive any information that I was not free to pass on.

TERMINATION

I received no support from any of the other four members of the Authority for a motion to terminate the contract. I recorded my intention to take the matter further.

I have asked the Minister of Agriculture to consider using his discretionary powers under the Primary Products Marketing Act along one of the following lines:

(1) Make provision to enable the termination of the contract in December, 1964, provided the Industry shows clearly in the election to be held in September, 1964, that termination is still desired. Clause 9 of the Agreement provides for termination not earlier than December, 1965, unless notice is given in December, 1963. (This would appear to be the bare minimum of provision appropriate under the circumstances).

(2) Make provision for earlier termination in the light of (a) The fact that its application has unnecessarily restricted exports and is likely to do so in the future; (b) Any weaknesses in the Agreement itself which may be apparent to him and which in his opinion justify such action.

To which the Minister replied as follows:—

"I acknowledge your letter of 23 Oct., 1963, concerning the New Zealand Honey Marketing Authority's Agreement with Kimpton Brothers (Red Carnation) Ltd.

"The Primary Products Marketing Act, 1953, gives me power to direct the Authority as to a specific course of action, but any such direction may be given only pursuant to the policy of the Government. In this case, before I could direct the Authority to terminate the Agreement, it would have to be determined that the Agreement was not in accordance with Government policy.

"Under the Honey Marketing Authority Regulations, 1953, however, the Authority has power to determine its own marketing policy, and I think that the Government would not wish me to intervene in this matter.

"I should have been pleased to discuss this matter with you, but other engagements and the coming General Election unfortunately prevent me from doing so within the next few weeks.

Yours faithfully, B. E. TALBOYS, Minister of Agriculture."

At the appropriate time, I will make a further approach to the Minister. I am firmly convinced that termination of the Contract is essential to the best interests of the beekeepers of New Zealand. I strongly advise beekeepers to study the Agreement now available to them, and if I am unable to achieve earlier the electors' expressed will, then next September will provide the electors with an opportunity to turn a 1-4 minority to a 3-2 majority.

AN APPRECIATION

I wish to thank all those who supported me in the recent Honey Marketing Authority election. (signed) P. BERRY.

SEIZED HONEY STOCKS RETURNED

IT IS INDEED a shattering and devastating experience to find that the profound and erudite pronouncements of the experts are utterly and completely wrong.

The vacuum that is left behind when reliance on expert knowledge is proved to be based on false premise, leaves the ordinary man-in-the-street completely bewitched, bebothered, and bewildered.

Divergent opinion and counter argument amongst experts is nothing new; counsel for the accused in the criminal court is equally convinced as his learned friend that their respective causes are right, yet they are diametrically opposed. The surgeon with lifelong experience in healing and mending the human form is likely to be adamant that his patient will suffer lasting effects from a mishap at work, whereas his colleague representing the man's employers would give the considered opinion that the injury is of a temporary nature, to be completely cured in a short period of time.

A more unsual situation — but one that is nevertheless the more confusing — is when the expert admits his expert opinion has been given on an unreliable basis.

Headlines in newspapers throughout the country in September informed the public that the Health Department was wrong in its allegation that certain honey stocks were toxic and unfit for human consumption.

Seizure Order Rescinded

Honey to the value of £22,000 which had been seized by the Health Department was ordered by the learned magistrate to be returned to the owners, and it was during the course of the legal proceedings that some extraordinary revelations of inaccuracy and ineptitude were made.

In an application to the Magistrate for the seizure Order to be rescinded, the Health Department, which had originally alleged that the honey was injurious to health, did not oppose the seizure being disallowed.

Seizure of the honey stocks had been made in pursuance of the provisions of section 12 of the Food and Drugs Act, and in a joint statement to the Court it was admitted that the method of testing initially relied upon by the Health Department was completely unreliable.

Samples of honey seized had been eaten in appreciable quantities by adults and children and had been found to cause no ill effect whatsoever. It was agreed that the honey stocks in question could be regarded as free from any injurious agent as previously alleged, and could be returned to the producer packer for sale.

Industry in Jeopardy

National vindication and the admission that the basis of testing was unreliable will no doubt help to allay public concern and restore consumer confidence, but there can be no possible doubt that the allegation by the Health Department jeopardised the honey industry and caused inexorable hardship to the producer-packer and to their trade names and marks. It has left in the minds of the general public a lingering doubt as to the authenticity of their cherished belief in the purity and health-giving properties of honey as a food.

'Toxic Honey' first entered beekeeping nomenclature some ten years ago, when a scientific officer of the Department of Agriculture became convinced that cases of sickness reported at Pongakawa in the Bay of Plenty had resulted from the consumption of honey derived from a particular source where unusual circumstances existed.

This source was in an area in which the tutu flourished, and the plants were heavily infested with the sucking insect **Scolypopa Australis,** commonly known as the passion vine hopper. It is established that the insect sucks the sap of the tutu plant and thereby produces a 'honey dew' which is attractive to the bees, and the 'honey dew' is considered to inherit some of the toxic properties of the tutu and may produce toxic honey.

Closure Area

A system of testing was therefore devised, and it was agreed that where tutu and hopper are found together in density, honey produced in that area must be considered potentially toxic. It was for this safeguarding reason that a vast area in the Bay of Plenty was closed to beekeeping, and there the matter rested until late in 1961.

In the latter part of that year, a field survey by departmental officers disclosed similar conditions to be existing in North Auckland, Whangarei and Far North areas, where the combination of tutu and hopper were found to be present. Temporary closure of these areas was imposed, and all sales of honey prohibited until testing was undertaken, using the methods developed ten years previously following the Pongakawa sickness.

Samples of honey taken and tested were pronounced to be toxic according to the tests made, and all honey was ordered to be destroyed as 'suspect'. The opinion of the departmental experts was that complete closure of Northland to beekeeping — as had been ordered ten years earlier in the Bay of Plenty — must be put into effect.

In the current episode, the honey seized and alleged to be 'highly toxic' came from some of the most productive areas for high-grade honey in New Zealand, ranging from central North Island to as far south as Taranaki. The same methods of 'testing' were employed as hitherto, and following the pronouncement that the samples were 'highly toxic' the Health Department, acting on the advice of expert opinion, exercised its powers under the Pure Food and Drugs Regulations to order withdrawal of all the condemned honey from sale for destruction.

If the scientific experts' findings were factual, the industry might have been bound to agree that wherever tutu and hopper were present together, the area must be closed to beekeeping, for the production of honey as a pure and unadulterated food is a first essential.

In substance and fact, however, the expert's findings were proved to be far from factual. Under cross-examination in a competent court of jurisdiction, the agricultural scientist on whose expert advice both Government and industry have relied, admitted, through counsel, that on further investigation he found his whole basis of testing to be unreliable, and that he could not, in fact, produce any evidence of toxicity whatever!

A Near Calamity

Viewed in retrospect the enormity of the near calamity to the industry defies imagination. A loss to the national economy of more than one-third of the annual Dominion honey crop; a loss to agriculture of pollination services worth millions of pounds; ruination for commercial beekeepers obliged to forfeit their life's work, and the loss to the public of one of nature's finest foods. It could so well have been.

The Association has been persistently pressing for years for greater scientific facilities to be made available to the industry by the Government. The Court case highlights the total inadequacy of the services provided, and underlines the necessity for a realistic expansion in scientific services in apiculture, both in numbers of highly qualified and specialist personnel, and the facilities necessary for their work and research.

The departments concerned must get together with the beekeeping industry to devise reliable ways and means of ensuring adequate protection. Such a lamentable and costly fiasco must never be permitted to occur again.

Late News Report.

November 1963 meeting at Wellington of the NATIONAL BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION GENERAL EXECUTIVE

THE GENERAL EXECUTIVE of the N.B.A. met under the chairmanship of the President, Mr. H. Cloake. Members present were Messrs J. R. Barber, P. Berry, J. Glynn and G. Winslade, with the General Secretary, Mr. R. A. Fraser, and the Editor, Mr. L. W. Goss, in attendance. Present by invitation for the first day's meeting was the Chairman of the Honey Marketing Authority, Mr. G. E. Gumbrell, for consultation and advice.

An early item on the busy agenda was the subject of allegedly toxic honey to be reviewed in the light of the recently concluded court proceedings affecting stocks held by a packer in the North Island, and the Conference resolution pertaining thereto.

Later in the day's business, the Director of Horticulture, Mr. A. M. W. Greig, and Mr. R. Walshe, representing the Apiary Section of the Department of Agriculture, were received, relative to this and other matters for consultation and discussion, and were informed of the following statement, drafted in collaboration with the Chairman of the H.M.A., and which is to be conveyed to the Minister of Agriculture and minuted to the Superintendent of Beekeeping:—

(1) "That as the matter of alleged toxicity is of such vital importance to beekeepers, the National Beekeepers' Association, together with the H.M.A., will take such steps as may be deemed necessary to safeguard the Industry.

(2) "That we presume that the Department will take such action as they think fit to establish positive tests for toxicity, and that the findings of such investigations will be made available to both the H.M.A. and the N.B.A. before publication.

(3) "That before new Departmental policy is formulated on the result of these investigations, we request that all evidence be considered by a joint meeting of representatives of the Industry and interested State Departments.

(4) "That we are convinced that nothing should impede or delay any work on biological control of the hopper until such time as this work is proved to be unnecessary."

DIRECTOR'S ASSURANCE

In relation to item (2), the Director assured the Executive that the Department was fully aware of the necessity for positive and constructive action and that, in fact, Government was currently considering the appointment of a specialist committee of highly qualified scientific investigators to study all aspects associated with the situation. In referring to the present acute staffing problems, mention was made of the considerably enhanced work and responsibility accruing to the Department arising from the allegations.

DIPLOMA IN APICULTURE

In connection with the projected examination for a Diploma in Apiculture to be issued by the N.Z. Institute of Horticulture, Mr. Greig stated that initial steps had already been instigated, and candidates would be able to sit the first examination in the near future. Honorary Diplomas in Apiculture have been awarded to 70 beekeepers and a list of the names of the successful applicants would be available for publication in the February edition of this Journal.

CONFERENCE DECISIONS

In reviewing action already taken and replies received concerning Conference decisions, it was agreed that the Department of Agriculture be asked to permit commercial beekeepers to use closed or prohibited areas for spring feeding between the months of June and December inclusive.

Application has been made for the de-control of honey prices, but the Minister had indicated that no early decision could be expected in view of present

circumstances. Application was therefore lodged for an increase in the Price Order, and it was confidently expected that a favourable decision would be made at an early date.

Close consideration was given to the suggestion that a Costs and Prices Committee be appointed by the Executive, to constantly review costs of production in relation to honey prices, etc., but a pre-requisite to success in such an undertaking would be the necessity for the work to be handled by a qualified cost accountant, for which no member was qualified in this respect.

BURSARY AWARD

Applicants for the award of the Bursary must be members of the National Beekeepers' Association, be engaged in general commercial beekeeping practice within New Zealand, and to be not older than 35 years of age at the time applications for the Bursary are invited. It is anticipated that the first award will be made during the year 1965.

Assessment of the applicant's merit and qualifications for consideration in granting the Bursary will be the responsibility of a selection committee of three persons, such committee to be comprised of the Director of Agriculture or his nominee of a senior Departmental officer, sitting with two members of the Executive as constituted at that date.

As a guide to the selectors, the Executive recommend that the Selection Committee base their decision on the applicant's intelligence, ability to speak and write well, to have a sincere interest in beekeeping and Association affairs, a good personality and character, and a willingness to learn and impart his gleanings to members of the Industry.

CONDITIONS OF AWARD

As a condition of the award, it would be obligatory for the recipient of the Bursary on his return from overseas to attend Field Days in both Islands for a period of one year, such visits to be on a planned itinerary basis restricted to a reasonable amount of travelling, for which all expenses would be paid from the Bursary Fund.

Application forms will in due course be obtainable from the General Secretary, which on completion by an applicant will be forwarded to the Selection Committee.

Whilst it is impossible at this stage to define the precise period of absence from New Zealand or the actual venue, it is reasonable to assume that the time spent overseas could be between 3-6 months, and Canada and the United States of America the countries to be visited.

DIPLOMAS IN APICULTURE

Advice had been received that Honorary Diplomas were to be awarded to 70 applicants — as intimated by the Director of Horticulture earlier — but examination data for intending examinees is still awaited by the Association from the Institute.

H.M.A. ELECTIONS

Adequate steps will be taken to ensure that future voting papers are received to allow ample time to permit return by mail, and a request has been made to the Minister of Agriculture for sanction of such an extension.

Mr. George Winslade, of Oamaru, has now undertaken responsibility for furthering the organisation of Training Seminettes, based on the South Auckland pilot scheme, and an endeavour will be made to plan similar seminettes in both Islands.

DOMINION CONFERENCE

The Dominion Conference and Annual General Meeting of the Association is to be held in Hastings on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, July 29, 30 and 31. Details of meeting place and other relevant information will be provided at a later date.

Editor's Note: Until such time as adequate and proven research dictates an alteration to the contrary, no further reference will be made in this Journal to "toxicity" unless conjoined with the appendage "alleged".

HONEY MARKETING AUTHORITY

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT — 1963

The Authority held a three-day meeting in Auckland on October 15, 16 and 17, when among many other matters, the bonus payment for the past year was decided on and the terms and conditions fixed for the invitation for supply for the coming season. We have had a good trading year and apart from 1958-9 when we received only 494 tons of honey, have made the highest overall average payout ever made in the history of the Authority. Cheques, information circular and invitation to supply should be in producers' hands before this appears in print.

POLICY MATTERS

Three years ago the Authority realised that in order to obtain continuity of supplies there was need for a revision in the methods of payment for honey and the category system was introduced. It is pleasing to record that this aim has been achieved and all honeys are now free of subsidy from realisation of other grades of honey. This is a major achievement and in the ultimate will mean an increase in the consumption of honeys below the white clover grade in New Zealand, and a consequent improvement in the returns for the other grades of honey. All stocks should be cleared before the new season's honey becomes available in any quantity, and the overall picture of trading for the coming year is very encouraging. The Authority's policy is to encourage the export of as much of the high priced honey as possible, and so make the other honeys available to the local market. The reduction in quantity of the Light Amber honeys available for export has been instrumental in securing better prices overseas for these honeys, while the net returns in the HoneyGold pack exceed any export return so far received.

KIMPTON BROTHERS' CONTRACT

In accordance with his election manifesto, Mr Percy Berry moved that steps be taken to terminate the Authority's contract with Messrs Kimpton Brothers (Red Carnation) Ltd. The motion was seconded "pro forma" so that a vote could be taken, with the result that Mr Berry was the only member voting in favour of the motion.

Unquestionably, our contract with Messrs Kimpton Brothers Ltd, has been a major factor in securing the returns that beekeepers now enjoy. Although our white clover honey is in a class of its own on world markets and realises top prices, it must not be forgotten that our other grades of honey all command a premium over similar grading honeys from other countries. While this happy state of affairs is partly due to our grading system, it is a fact that our trading system is the envy of all other honey exporting countries. This fact was amply demonstrated to me when I visited Europe last year, and any change in the present "modus operandi" would result in a reduction in returns to producers which would be deplorable.

FUTURE OPERATIONS

This past season has seen a departure from the traditional "two tins in a case" form of package. While the single "60" in a cardboard outer has undeniably come to stay, your Authority considers that the 44-gallon drum offers the most scope for reduction in handling costs. The cost of the actual drum approximates the cost of 2 x 60 to a case, but the saving in handling costs both to a producer and the Authority could be considerable. It is obvious that this type of container will be used in increasing numbers, and your Authority is continuing to explore the various problems that confront the "change-over".

HONEY GRADING

Rewa Rewa honey has proved itself as a valuable blending honey with a value above the grade points usually allotted. This honey is now subject to a special bonus grading for flavour, and production of this Rewa Rewa honey should now give a worthwhile return.

SEALS REGULATIONS

Application has been made to have these regulations amended so as to do away with the seal on the lid. Some beekeepers have already had their carton blocks altered to make this change but the amount of money involved in paying for the printing of the seal on the lid is far too great to be ignored.

GENERAL

During the coming year all members of the Authority are available and willing to address gatherings of beekeepers throughout the country. It would, however, be appreciated if some thought could be given to the geographical situation when issuing invitations to members. This applies not only to the individual member's commitments but also to the expense angle: unnecessary travelling should be avoided.

May I wish you all the compliments of the season and a bumper crop.

G. E. GUMBRELL, Chairman

U.K. HONEY MARKET COULD EASE

(from the Bank of New Zealand Produce Report, November '63)

WHITE CLOVER has remained firm on the London market at between 180s. and 185s. and recent sales now leave only a relatively small availability advises the London Office of the Bank of New Zealand. Extra Light Amber have been cleared in recent weeks, Light Amber and Medium Amber being almost unobtainable for sometime.

With new crops approaching, there has been some easing in forward prices of Argentine and Mexican honey, although the easing has only been slight. However, should these countries have bumper crops there could be a further easing in prices.

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Presentation To Library

Mr. Chris Dawson of Timaru, the Association's hon. librarian, pictured here receiving a copy of "ABC and XYZ of Beekeeping" from veteran beekeeper, 82-year-old Mr. G. T. Clark. Inscribed on the fly leaf is the message: "Although this book is old, it has never been improved on and the system of beekeeping is correct. — George Taylor Clark."

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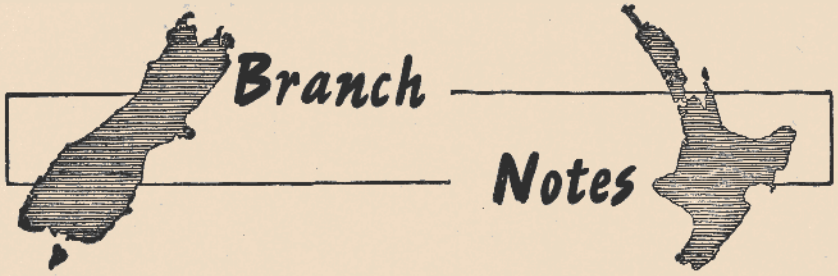

NELSON

The August meeting of this Branch was devoted to a tape recording of the proceedings at Conference, and members were very interested indeed to be able to hear events "first hand".

At the September meeting, films were shown by the Horticultural Superintendent, Mr. M. G. Baumgart, and in particular, "BEE MEETS BEE" was enjoyed by everyone and especially our ladies, most of whom prefer not to venture too close to hives in reality.

The October meeting will be our Field Day, for which arrangements are well in hand, and we are particularly gratified that two members of the Nelson Branch have been awarded Honorary Diplomas in Apiculture.

(Reported by Mrs. I. M. Cropp)

SOUTH AUCKLAND

We have had a wonderful period of queen breeding in this area with three weeks of perfect weather, giving conditions for prompt mating and a high percentage of layers.

After a cold, wet, windy winter, bees were very slow to work the heath, but in sheltered areas up to four combs were gathered. Five-finger was very poor in most areas, but willow has been a big surprise as the pussy started to yield in early September, and is still in flower in mid-October with bees working it. Some hives stored a full box. Straight willow is still in flower and has yielded well — quite a rare occurrence here in the north. Now that the atmosphere is heavily perfumed with barbary the bees have found a new source, and indications are that the flowering period will be a long one. A lot of swarming seems likely this season.

(Reported by C. Bird, Matamata)

HAWKES BAY

Conditions generally in the Hawkes Bay district are good, and hives have weathered the winter well and are in excellent condition with bees at maximum strength.

Branch activities have been quiet for the past few months, but an interesting evening was held on Tuesday, October 8, to hear our delegate's report of the Conference at Oamaru. We were, of course, delighted to learn that next year's Conference is to be held in Hastings, and preliminary plans are already under discussion.

This will be the first time since 1939 that Hawkes Bay has been the venue for the annual Conference, and visitors from far and near may be assured of a very warm welcome.

(Reported by Mrs. Freda Maultsaid)

WEST COAST

The West Coast Field Day and picnic was at Lake Kaneri—east of Hokitika—on Saturday, November 16, and included the traditional 'Coast' welcome to visitors and friends.

The flora this year has been particularly good, with a profusion of native clematis, fuchsia, tarata, quintinia, rangiora, etc., giving plenty of pollen and just sufficient nectar to stimulate brood rearing. The result has been either very strong colonies near to swarming, or colonies dead for want of stores.

The tawa and kamahi are yielding large quantities of strongly flavoured nectar, and they are to us on the Coast as manuka is in other areas. They can be a saver in the spring, provide winter stores and occasionally pay the expenses for the year.

The weather has been very changeable with two good days marred by a bad one. (Reported by Tom Holland Karoro, Greymouth)

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CANTERBURY

Several years ago this Branch ran a stall at the Canterbury Industries Fair in Christchurch with considerable success and this winter, in an attempt to boost sales, a similar effort was made. There is no doubt that bees (behind a sheet of glass anyway) are an attraction equal to the best at the fair and seldom was the stall without an interested spectator. And if the spectators went away without buying a pot of honey, it was not for the want of effort by those staffing the stall. Over two tons and a half were sold in the two weeks. The profit made helped towards the expenses. The remainder of the cost was borne by members displaying honey and by a grant from the Honey Marketing Authority.

Too little effort is made today to sell honey, and much more could be made by branches in their own areas. An 'Apimondia' week on a Dominion-wide scale could be well worth while.

We had a long wet winter which was hard on bees in the higher country. Many hives were lost in the snow areas when bees dropping on the bottom board blocked the entrance. However, a good willow, brassica and dandelion flow has boosted them along and we are all ready for the bumper harvest 'Griff' is predicting.

A social evening late in October was well attended. Ralph Bushby showed slides of his Pacific cruise and Trevor Ross showed his of Raoul Island where he spent twelve months a year ago.

A presentation of Honorary Diplomas was foiled by the non-appearance of the diplomas!

(Reported by Jasper Bray, Leeston)

DOMESTIC BRANCH

The newly formed domestic group of the Canterbury Branch held a very successful evening in Christchurch in September when the Apiary Instructor, Mr Griffin, gave a lecture on bee diseases illustrated by colour slides.

The detail provided in the colour slides enabled many of the audience to have their first close look at conditions as they appear in the brood chamber when disease is present, and the series were presented at a particularly useful time just prior to spring cleaning and inspection.

Following Mr Griffin's lecture, a brains trust comprising Messrs Griffin, David Penrose and George Hicks answered questions submitted by the audience, and the knowledge gained by the branch will be most usefully applied in the months ahead.

SOUTH CANTERBURY

The annual Field Day on November 9 was well attended, although the Clerk of the Weather could have been kinder by the provision of a fine day.

Following a most informative talk by Mr. V. Cook on methods used by bees to handle nectar and honey, members and visitors assembled at the apiary of John McKenzie to see a demonstration of a 'Kelly' boom truck loader, which certainly takes the heavy lifting labour from beekeeping.

A further attempt to demonstrate queen mating met with failure, due to the fact that it was far too cold for drone flight, and Mr. I. W. Forster had to return a chilled queen to the 'bank'. Despite the weather, it was an enjoyable and informative day.

Notes for Beginners

Mr. Chris Dawson of Timaru is the author of this series of articles to assist the amateur and newcomer to beekeeping. Mr. Dawson has contributed to the feature for a number of years under the nom-de-plume of "SKEP".

ON YOUR MARKS!

With his foot against the starting block, every beekeeper is waiting for that which his whole season's work is planned to win.

Therefore, it is of the utmost importance that whatever is done at this time of the year is appropriate to the occasion because the crop could so easily be lost by incorrect manipulation.

Managing the colonies up to this stage has been aimed at building colonies that are strong enough to yield a surplus crop. All colonies should be boiling over with bees and, except in districts where the main honey flow comes late, it is now too late to give stimulative feeding to build up strength. Colonies short of stores will have to be fed and, if honey is not available, a syrup of equal parts of sugar and water will be the most effective.

The beekeeper will have been inspecting colonies; making supplies of food available where they are needed; moving a few frames of brood from the very strong colonies to those needing to be built up; encouraging the slow; borrowing from those strong enough to have something to spare; all the time evening up so that every colony is strong enough to harvest a surplus.

While this work is going on, each colony must be given enough space to be comfortable, but not too much so that extra energy is used in keeping empty supers warm. The colony that is overcrowded and too hot will have a tendency to build queen cells and swarm; the colony that is not warm enough will not encourage the queen to lay as vigorously as she should.

SWARMING

Some beekeepers will be checking every nine days to locate swarm cells. In the days of my adolescent beekeeping I carefully examined every corner of every frame for any sign of Queen Cells, but now, by requeening every colony every second year, and by maintaining ventilation at front entrance and on top, swarming problems have almost disappeared.

It is always one of my inflexible rules never to breed from a queen that has swarmed, and perhaps this form of selective breeding has also given a helpful result.

One method of checking for Swarm Cells described by Sefton Line in the May, 1962, issue of "The N.Z. Beekeeper," makes the task easier and saves the beekeeper's back. The second super is slid forward an inch and then tilted so that the lower edges of the frames can be easily inspected after a wisp of smoke is wafted across them. Most swarm cells are built along the lower edge of the frames of the second super, and if the frames of comb are in good order, most swarm cells are found in this area.

SUPERING UP

When the main honey flow begins, good judgment is necessary to decide when the next super should be added. If added too soon the lower supers may be left empty, and if added too late crowding can cause swarming and loss of the honey carriers.

Every year, when the main honey flow starts, there is one job I always do. Any colony that has not three supers boiling full of bees is placed on top of another colony. In this area, it takes three full supers of bees to secure a surplus crop on our usually short honey flow. Better to secure a surplus from one colony full of bees than to carry two smaller colonies over the honey flow, and just have two colonies at the season's end.

HONEY HOUSE PREPARATION

If all your reserve supers are ready to be placed on the hives when required, check over the extracting gear. As soon as extracting starts, the days will not be long enough, and small jobs can cause considerable delays that use valuable time.

Ask yourself a lot of questions, and the more experience you have had the more questions you will be able to ask.

Is the extractor safely anchored? Are the gears in good order? Are the brakeband and lining going to last the

season? Are the baskets needing repair? Is the spindle well seated? Is the uncapping knife sharp and steam-tight? Has the honey tank any leaks? And, last of all, but most important—is the pin holding the honey gate worn?

There are quite a few humorous (and sad) stories told of beekeepers who suddenly found themselves holding the lever in one hand and, with the other hand, holding back a lot of honey that would ooze from the gate while they yelled for Mum, kids, police, parson, or any sympathetic ear that might be within "cooee" to rescue them and their precious golden store.

It is recorded of one Scotsman that he waited five hours with his hand clasped over the gate until a chance visitor called and was greeted at the honey house by a very tired and bad-tempered beekeeper who did not at all appreciate being shown a towel nearby that he could have used to choke the gate.

We are told, too, that a beekeeper, early one afternoon on a sultry mid-summer day, asked his wife to hold a bung against the gate for a few minutes while he rushed to a nearby shop to buy a new pinion. On the way he met a friend, began talking and walking, and spent a very enjoyable afternoon in congenial company until early in the evening he remembered something and rushed home at high speed. It is not recorded just what hit his head as it came around the honey house door.

MOVING TO THE HONEY FLOW

By careful observation it is possible to assess the honey flow potential of various areas around a district and shift some hives to a honey flow. When one area has not yet come to yielding other areas are giving a crop, and when other areas are dried up there still are areas of good honey flow within a few miles. The knowledge needed to successfully do this is accumulated over a period of years, and it is possible to considerably increase the profitable crop by use of this system.

Migratory beekeeping is an extensive industry in parts of Australia, where it is possible to move to a honey flow most of the year.

SECTION COMB HONEY

Every beginner likes to produce some section honey. There is no doubt that in those districts where there is a long honey flow the production of section honey is easier, but the shorter the flow the greater the skill that is necessary to produce good sections.

Strong colonies are an absolute necessity, and the handling of the bees so that they do not swarm takes some skill. It is a very satisfying feeling to be able to sell or place on the tea table some beautifully finished comb honey sections.

BUILDING NUCLEI

From a reasonably strong colony 10 or more nuclei can be built by using the following routine.

Place your "nuc" boxes in a circle around the hive with all entrances

Lay-out for the creation of 10 nuclei from a strong colony.

facing inward, and place "nuc" mats and lids beside each empty "nuc" box.

Remove the two top supers and, starting with the lowest super, remove frames and place a frame of brood covered with bees into each "nuc" box. This frame should be placed on the side of the "nuc" box closest to the entrance. Beside this first frame, place a second frame of stores and use up the rest of the frames of stores and bees to bring up the "nucs" to a maximum of three frames.

Queen cells or caged queens can now be placed between the frames, and then the mats should be stretched carefully over the top before the lid goes on. If there is any chance of robbing, it is important that the mat and lid fit snugly and that the front entrance is small. Your "nuc" box should have a ventilation hole covered with gauze so that a restricted entrance does not make the inside conditions too hot.

After you have removed the last super and bottom board, and all signs of the old colony, the bees that come home will spread themselves evenly around the nuclei.

In the picture you will see an oblong "door mat" which was placed in front of the hive about a week before the "nucs" were made. This is the "landmark" by which the bees find their hive, and if it is left in the centre of the area where the hive formerly was there will be no drifting.

You will notice that I have not mentioned "finding the Queen" of the debuilt colony. As I like to carry out this task as quickly as possible, I do not waste time looking for the queen, but keep a sharp look-out during the operation. If she is found, she is placed with the frame on which she is found in another "nuc" box, but if she is not found she is always located on the first check to see if the cells have hatched because **that** "nuc" will have new-laid eggs in the frames.

After three days, the "nucs" can be drawn back about four feet and the bees will continue to find their new homes.

You will note from the picture that the "nucs" facing the sun and facing the same way as the old colony are further away from the door mat than the others. This is to reduce the tendency of the bees to go to these nuclei.

PARTHIAN SHOT

Almost anybody can take honey off a hive but the bee-master knows how much to leave on.

Obituary

The death occurred recently of Mr. Henry Geddes, who was born in Waimate 82 years ago.

At an early age he became interested in bees and retained that interest throughout his life.

Moving from Waimate in 1914, he started farming in Tokoroa, combining beekeeping with mixed farming, and in 1930 moved to Rotorua where for 24 years he was engaged in honey production.

Mr. Geddes took an active interest in the National Beekeepers' Association, and was responsible for organising the Conference held in Rotorua.

Retiring to Whangamata nine years ago, he still retained a hive of bees for interest and to pollinate his orchard.

Mr. Geddes is survived by his wife, two sons and three daughters, and was predeceased by his eldest son nine years ago. His second son, Keith, was engaged in manufacturing hives and equipment in Rotorua for a number of years.

LETTERS to the EDITOR

Waipuhura,
Sir, September 25, 1963.

I am interested in sitting the examination for the Diploma in Apiculture.

I have been beekeeping for 16 years.

Can you please give me particulars as to when, how and where one can sit this examination.

L.J.B.

The Examinations for the Diploma are being arranged by the N.Z. Institute of Horticulture under whose aegis the Diploma has been established. To date a syllabus covering the scope and extent of study and examination has been finalised but as far as I am aware no finality has yet been reached in the preparation or selection of suitable text books nor have arrangements been completed for the conducting of examinations either written or practical.

Your letter has been forwarded to Mr K. J. Lemmon, Secretary, Royal N.Z. Institute of Horticulture, P.O. Box 450, Wellington, C.1, requesting that you be supplied with a copy of the syllabus and any further information available at this stage.—Editor.

Invercargill
Sir, October 14, 1963

May I congratulate Mr. James Barber and Mr. Percy Berry, the successful candidates in the recent election of Producer Representatives to the Honey Marketing Authority.

I would also like to congratulate Mr. Poole on his courage and initiative in departing from custom in using your paper for the exposition of his policy, an example I propose to follow next year. I hope by the time this appears in print that the Executive will have made amends for the unfortunate late publication of "The Beekeeper," at least to the extent of refunding Mr. Poole the cost of his statement.

Finally, I would like to thank those who supported me, and those who would have done so had they received their voting papers in time to record their votes.

J. W. Fraser

Lateness in publication of the August issue was in no way the fault of the Executive, and was due to circumstances completely beyond their control. The inconvenience caused to readers and advertisers was deplored by the Executive and urgent representations made to prevent a recurrence in the future.—Editor.

Piopio.
Sir, November 1, 1963

I would like to thank all those who voted for me in the recent H.M.A. Election.

It is a matter for regret to us all that the arrangements for the election proved to be unsatisfactory in some respects, and that is the reason why a circular did not reach voters from me. There was insufficient time for it to reach electors to be of any use.

There were enough candidates to make an interesting election, and I thank those who offered their services and for the good wishes extended to me by them.

In the case of my former colleague, Jack Fraser, the voting was so even as to be neither a defeat nor a victory for either of us, but I feel sure that we shall see him in the field again in twelve months' time.

New blood on the Authority is certainly a good thing. If we carried on too long with the same group it would be fatally easy to become complacent. I trust and hope that the new Authority will work out to be in the best interests of us all.

J. R. Barber

Official notification of votes cast for the contending candidates for the H.M.A. Election will be found on page 4.—Editor.

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HONEY FILLER

WOULD South Island beekeeper who answered our August advertisement please write again as correspondence was unfortunately lost.

ENGINEERING WORKS,
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DURING March, it is my intention to holiday in the North Island. If I could help any beekeeper by showing my Queen Rearing methods, it would be a pleasure to do so. I am unable to accept any more orders this season. Please write:

CHRIS DAWSON, 11 Cain St., Timaru

The National Beekeepers' Association

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

'Better Beekeeping — Better Marketing'

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Up to	£ s. d.	Up to	£ s. d.
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The N.Z. Beekeeper

This Journal is issued free to all beekeepers in New Zealand having 30 or more registered hives, and to others who are members of the National Beekeepers' Association.

Literary contributions and advertisements must be in the hands of the Editor, Mr. L. W. Goss, 78A Moncks Spur, Redcliffs, Christchurch, not later than the first of month of publication.

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.

Advertisement Rates

Quarter Page	£1 16 0	Per Inch	10 0
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Full Page	£6 0 0		

the robber meets his fate (front cover picture)

On an autumn afternoon a predatory wasp attempted to rob hard-earned supplies of honey from a super lamentably short in surplus stocks.

Ever watchful in the communal interests of the hive, a guard bee darted from its customary station to resist the insidious attempts of the invader.

A well-placed sting from the guard bee into the soft flesh of the wasp's mouth quickly produced a paralysing and lethal effect.

The editor of this journal was enjoying the relaxation of watching the coming and going of the workers in their daily toil, and witnessed the attack and combat.

Placed in a matchbox, the robber wasp was conveyed to the bright lights of a studio and photographed before the body structure or sting had shrunk or deteriorated sufficiently to prevent a photographic record of this triumph of right over wrong.

The arrow clearly indicates the sting and adhering portions of the bee's anatomy, freely given in communal defence.

Even in death the wasp has a frightening appearance of defiance.

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