

THE

N.Z. HONEYBEE

A JOURNAL DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF BEEKEEPERS

EDITOR-MANAGER

P. A. HILLARY

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Low Average Honey Crop

Honey Crop Prospects

The honey season has been a very unfavourable one, and the Waikato-Auckland crop will be below half the average. The whole month of December was notable for a series of cold winds, with frequent stormy weather. January was very little better.

The bee strength of the hives was depleted, and uniting had to be resorted to all too frequently. The storms were succeeded by brief spells of hot, sultry weather during which swarming swept through the hives like a fever. This meant further uniting, or else hopeless colonies.

The fields were white with clover during January, but the cold winds and rain not only prevented the bees from flying, but also very seriously affected the capacity of the clover to secrete nectar.

The Dominion Crop

The Southland area experienced a total failure of the honey crop, but in Canterbury better conditions prevailed and a normal harvest was secured.

Taranaki was unfortunate, with

severe weather conditions reducing crop prospects to zero, whilst the Manawatu did a little better.

In view of the many complete crop failures, especially in Southland, efforts have been made to secure Government relief by way of loans to beekeepers for the purchase of sugar to feed bees where hardship is being suffered. Also a rebate of the duty on sugar is being pressed for.

Shortage of Honey

There will be a definite shortage of honey in New Zealand this season and beekeepers who have been fortunate enough to secure a fair crop should be cautious in making sales. Just for a few weeks a little pressure on the local market to secure ready money may cause beekeepers to accept low prices. The accepting of these "hardship" price levels affects the market for months, losing many hundreds of pounds to the industry. A fair price should be asked and firmly held to. This helps stabilisation at a payable level.

A good quality honey of fine grain should bring 9/- per dozen for one pound cartons, and 17/6 for 2lb. tins.

Prompt Delivery

We have had one or two complaints re the delay in the delivery of the "N.Z. Honeybee." These complaints have been investigated and have been remedied and under rigid supervision the trouble will not occur again. Any subscriber who does not receive his journal before the 25th of the month would help us by letting us know.

Correction

On the front page of the December issue in the 25th line of the report on the Honey Board Election, the word "primary" should read "present."

"THE N.Z. HONEYBEE is extremely interesting and instructive and I wish to have it monthly. 3/6 herewith."—E.G.P., Taranaki.

The "N.Z. Honeybee" has Fulfilled Its Purpose

To Help the Industry

Two years ago the "Small-holder" ceased publication. It was the only beekeeping journal in the Dominion. For five months the beekeeping industry was without any publication giving instruction in the keeping of bees and information concerning the production and marketing of honey.

Many requests from all parts of New Zealand were made to the writer to start a beekeeping journal. At the 1937 Conference in Wellington, these requests were repeated, and at that Conference the writer acceded to the requests and made an offer in Conference to publish a monthly bee journal in the interests of the industry, personally paying the losses certain to be made during the building up period. An option over the journal was given to the National Beekeepers' Association in the event of its disposal.

Enthusiastic Approval

The proposal was enthusiastically approved by Conference, and the following month the "N.Z. Honeybee" made its appearance. Three thousand copies were sent out monthly for a year, and nearly every beekeeper in the Dominion received three free copies of the Journal, the postage alone costing £6/5/- per issue.

Advertisers who found the journal suitable for their purposes, were necessarily very few and to these we express our gratitude for their generous help.

Subscriptions came in rapidly, showing the desire in the industry for a journal purely devoted to beekeeping. The list grew and grew until the fourth and fifth hundred were passed; the sixth hundred having just recently been reached. Every week new subscriptions are coming in, three being received in to-day's mail—from Tariki (Taranaki), Alexandra (Central Otago), and Rotowaro (Waikato).

To the hundreds of beekeepers who

sent subscriptions to the Journal (paying up to four years in advance), we express our deep appreciation. Their encouraging and enthusiastic letters and their confidence in the project made our work well worth while.

The "N.Z. Honeybee" has, after considerable initial financial loss, now definitely begun to show a good margin of profit, and it was intended shortly to increase the Journal from eight to twelve pages and to publish photographs.

Purpose Fulfilled

However, owing to a Government monetary grant, the National Beekeepers' Association is now able to finance a beekeeping journal of its own, the first issue of which appeared a few days ago. We extend to the newcomer a hearty welcome, with every wish for its future success. The opportunity for service to the industry exists to-day as never before, and granted that the new journal is conducted upon the principle of high service, with constructive impersonal, positive and educational ideals, the power and influence of the journal for good should grow to an extent hardly dreamed of.

The "N.Z. Honeybee" has now served its purpose and fulfilled its destiny. It will cease publication with this issue. To the many helpful contributors of news items and reports, and to our band of encouraging, constructive and friendly readers, we now take our leave, with sincere wishes for their prosperity and happiness.

Progressive Bee Journal

The South African Bee Journal is making splendid progress under the able direction of its Editor, Mr. A. C. Harris. New features are being introduced and the size increased to 24 pages.

Appreciation of Service

Presentation to Board Chairman

A very pleasing ceremony took place recently at Milne & Choyce's, Auckland, when Mr. J. R. Butland, the Chairman of the late Honey Export Control Board, was entertained to lunch.

On behalf of the honey-producing industry of the Dominion, Mr. P. A. Hillary presented Mr. Butland with a handsome illuminated address in appreciation of his long years of service on the Board, and of his high sense of duty and loyalty to the industry. The speaker emphasised the valuable work in the stabilisation of the industry that had been accomplished by the Board under Mr. Butland's leadership. Taking over the active marketing of exports when beekeepers in the Dominion were struggling in the throes of the world depression and averaging 2½d. per lb. for their honey, the Board had built up the confidence of beekeepers by progressive annually-increased pay-outs until the industry had secured a degree of stabilised prosperity that the Board could well be proud of, the peak pay-out being 6½d. per lb. pro rata in 1936.

Restored Confidence of Producers

The increase in the number of colonies in commercial honey-producing area in the last years of the Board's operations was a tribute to the changed conditions and outlook effected by the Board's policy and returns to bee-keepers.

The personal attention and the continual sacrifice of time, the well-planned and sound business policy, the long-range scheme of marketing, were aspects of Mr. Butland's work that were little known to producers. However, the result and affects were definite and concrete.

In recognition of Mr. Butland's services the beekeepers of the Dominion (including the largest commercial pro-

ducers) wished to express their esteem and their deep appreciation of his services by presenting him with an illuminated address. Their best wishes for his future happiness and welfare accompanied their gift.

Beautiful Illuminated Address

The illuminated address was beautifully designed and artistically finished in many colours with a handsome frame. The great number of signatures required six columns of space.

The text of the address read as follows:—

"To:

J. R. Butland, Esq.,
Late Chairman,
N.Z. Honey Export Control
Board.

"Dear Sir,

"In view of your decision to retire from the Chairmanship of the N.Z. Honey Control Board, it is the desire of those engaged in the Beekeeping Industry in New Zealand to express to you their appreciation of your long and invaluable service in the organisation of overseas markets for the Dominion's exports of honey.

"Under your able direction, the markets showed most gratifying expansion. During the six years of your Chairmanship of the Board, pay-outs to honey-producers steadily and progressively rose to higher levels, until, during the year just past, a high-water mark of successful achievement was recorded.

"The efficiency of the Honey Control Board's business arrangements, and the proved soundness of its general policy, indicate a high degree of personal attention and unremitting care,

"The gratitude of producers is tendered to you with their sincere wishes for your future welfare and happiness."

Revealing Letter from Central Europe

Destructive Conditions

The following very interesting and revealing letter was written to the Editor of the "N.Z. Honeybee" by a beekeeper of Central Europe:—

"Dear Sir,—I am a professional beekeeper and should like to settle down in New Zealand. Regrettably, I have no relatives or acquaintances in the Dominion, so am taking the liberty of applying to you asking you to favour me with information regarding conditions in New Zealand, and, if possible, assisting me in finding work there.

"The reason why I am forced to emigrate is that the — Government has, under pressure from —, adopted drastic measures against Jews. Now, I am not a Jew, but a Christian from my birth, and my father and all his ancestors were Christians. But as my mother was of Jewish birth, and, according to recent — legislation, persons of whom one parent is of Jewish birth receive the same harsh treatment as meted out to Jews; so I am debarred from any useful work in my occupation in my country in the future.

Emigrate to New Zealand

"I occupy a prominent official position on our National Organisation of Beemasters. I have 100 colonies of bees, equipped for migratory beekeeping, and my bee-farm is considered a model one. The largest apiary in this country comprises 350 colonies, and with 100 colonies it is possible to make a living.

I would prefer to set up for myself in beekeeping in New Zealand, but as the expert of capital depends upon official permits most difficult to obtain, I must consider taking a position as an employee with a commercial apiarist. I should be content to begin at the lowest rung of the ladder. I am 29 years of age, unmarried.

Capital Required?

"Could you supply me with information on the economic aspects of

beekeeping in New Zealand, and what wages are paid to a skilled assistant. How much capital is required for establishing sufficient bees to make a living? Are the prospects sufficient as to warrant starting with borrowed capital?

"As an appreciation of your kindness, I am enclosing an English translation of an article on "Beekeeping in —," written for the "N.Z. Honeybee."
Yours, etc., —."

The above letter reveals in rather a startling manner, the destructive, depressing, negative conditions existing in Central Europe to-day, which show in sharp contrast to the peaceful, constructive, progressive and prosperous environment that generally obtains in the beekeeping industry in this Dominion. We have a great deal to be thankful for.

Return £1 per Colony

In answers to the enquiries in the letter, it is possible only to generalise, as different persons react differently to the same set of conditions. A beekeeper with experience, efficiency, and business ability could secure a good living in a locality where a less able beekeeper would contract debts.

In order to secure efficiency in honey-production, the average person requires five years' experience at a commercial apiary. The wages are £1 per week with free board and lodging for the first year, and a rise in wages of £1 per week each year. Many assistants prove to be unsuitable and are discharged after the first or second years. They drift from apiary to apiary, and eventually drift into some other occupation. The promising assistants are retained by their employers and are often given good wage increases, according to capability. A really first-class assistant with managing ability can secure as much as £4 per week plus an annual bonus according to the crop, also free board and lodging. There are very few such positions available, however, in this country.

250 Colonies Required

The number of colonies required to enable a married beekeeper to make a really good living are 250 in about four or five apiaries. The rough annual average crop per "commercial" colony is 100lbs. For a fair-grade honey, 4½d. per lb. is obtainable to-day, giving a gross return per colony of £1/17/6. After deducting transport costs, wages for labour, depreciation, interest on capital, cost of tins, cases, freight, rent, etc., a nett amount of £1 per colony is roughly left as wages for the apiarist. The average annual nett return from 250 colonies would be £250.

The cost of living in New Zealand would average 30/- per week for board and lodging for a single man, and other expenses according to personal tastes and habits of the individual.

Capital £3 per Colony

The capital outlay required to start an apiary of 250 colonies would be about £750, averaging out at £3 per colony (including a honeyhouse, second-hand motor-truck, honey-extracting equipment, and sufficient supers and combs to make each colony three storeys high). It would

not be advisable to start with less than 50 per cent. of capital required.

The better plan is to work as an apiary assistant until £500 cash has been saved. With this amount of capital a sound start can be made.

The better honey-producing areas of the North Island have been fully taken up by beekeepers. The only way to secure a good locality (without adopting piracy tactics), is to purchase the apiary business of a small commercial producer which provides room for expansion to at least 250 colonies. When this area is fully developed, and if further expansion is needed to provide for a family, adjoining or nearby apiaries may perhaps be purchased. To start apiaries in localities producing poor-grade honeys is waste of time and effort, and often causes serious loss of capital.

In the South Island, the best areas are all occupied by beekeepers, but there are a few secondary localities where fair-grade honeys may be secured that are not yet taken up.

If any commercial apiarist desires to secure the services of our correspondent and sends us his name, we will be pleased to place our correspondent in direct communication with the apiarist. — Editor "N.Z. Honeybee."

Our Last Issue

This issue of the "N.Z. Honeybee" is the last that will be published. We have a few copies of each issue (from the first) that are available to anyone desiring them (at the usual subscription rates). The unused portions of subscriptions paid by readers will be returned to them in due course. We would ask those who have balances due to them to grant us their patience, as the task of estimating the amounts, securing postal notes, and posting 600 letters will take some time as we are only able to spare a certain measure of time to the work of the Journal.

Would any subscribers who do not receive the balance due to them (as refunds of their unexpired subscrip-

tions) before April 30, kindly communicate with us, stating amount due. The matter will receive our immediate attention.

A Progressive Organisation

The Canterbury Beekeepers' Service is a most progressive Association of beekeepers, with a Secretary who is ideal for the office—tactful, courteous, constructive and with ideals of service and harmony. The organisation intends holding a big field day on February 25th, and the finest exhibition ever held in New Zealand in connection with beekeeping will be arranged, including honey equipment and samples of honey from all parts of the world. A record gathering of beekeepers is anticipated.

Work for the Month

Removing the Crop

Taking honey off the hives and extracting it is now in full swing in all apiaries. Combs should not be extracted unless at least three-quarters of the surface is capped over; otherwise the honey may be of low specific gravity.

The general practice is to lift a corner of the mat and give a gentle puff of smoke, then to gradually peel off the mat accompanied by further gentle puffs. (The entrance, of course, should have been gently smoked.) The well-capped combs are lifted out and the bees brushed gently (1) either into the super or (2) in front of the hive. Honey should only be removed when the bees are out in the field and the minimum bee population is in the hive. The bees in the hive between eleven and one o'clock are mostly young ones that are very "slow to anger." After three o'clock when the field bees begin to swell the hive population, the temper of the colony becomes steadily more explosive, until the point is reached where it is unpleasant to disturb the bees—just at dusk, especially if there is a cold wind. Therefore, the ideal time to remove honey is between eleven and one o'clock.

Carbolic Mats Harmful

Commercial beekeepers are compelled to take honey off earlier than eleven and later than one o'clock, and in order to permit this some have made use of carbolic mats. This practice drives the bees out of the supers, which can then be removed without brushing. The middle of a hot day gives the maximum efficiency in the use of this method. As the temperature lessens, the mats become less and less effective, and the mats have to be left on for longer and longer periods. This causes deterioration of the honey. At mid-day the effect is very slight, but is detectable upon analysis; earlier or later, the effect increases until the honey smells and tastes of the carbolic fumes.

The Government have decided to re-

ject all honey showing carbolic contamination. This will, in time, cause the complete abolition of the carbolic mat practice in New Zealand—it has, up to the present, only obtained a few adherents.

The general commercial usage in removing quantities of honey has been the use of bee-escapes. With these appliances the work is quietly and easily accomplished. The bee-escapes (placed under the supers to be removed), are put on late in the day. The next morning the whole super or supers above the escapes are removed and sorted in the honey-house. If the weather is warm the bees vacate the supers in a night if there is room below the escape. As the temperature drops, the speed of vacating the supers slows up and more bees are found in the supers. This hardly matters, as by this time the honey-flow is over, and the extra bees have no value. In the honey-house they fly to the window and bunch up. At night they can be removed and make a nice little nucleus with a cell or frame of young brood.

"Same-Day" Extracting

Combs of honey should be extracted the same day as removed, otherwise a considerable amount of honey is left in the combs, varying according to the atmospheric temperature. If these combs are not cleaned up by the bees, the honey later ferments, and the combs are then infected with ferment yeasts. If the bees do clean them up, a big proportion of the honey is consumed in the energy expended on the work.

Wet combs (those just extracted), may be cleaned up by placing them on top of hives above the mats with one corner of the mat turned back one inch. The combs should be removed to a store-room when clean, otherwise the wax-moth will infect and destroy them. A sheet of newspaper should be placed on top of supers of wet combs before the cover is placed on—this prevents robbing. If robbers fight along the cracks of the hives—

a rag soaked in carbolic and water, and rubbed along the crack will soon stop this.

If the robbers attack the cracks of a hive and later the entrance also, the best plan is to wet the cracks with carbolic and water, to place an armful of grass loosely in front of the entrance, and to drape sacks down over the four sides of the hive, holding them in place with a brick on top. This is very effective.

Robbing will shortly become prevalent with the least encouragement. The flow being over, the field bees discontentedly search for a source of further stores. Uncovered combs or hives soon attract them and in a few

minutes robbing has started. All supers freshly taken off a hive, queen excluders or mats also, should be immediately covered with sacks. Combs, with or without honey, should be kept continuously covered up, and the hive should be covered with two sugar-bags, one each side of the gap made by the comb which is being handled. All bits of loose comb should be scrupulously kept in a covered tin.

Wet combs stir bees to a robbing madness, and should only be put on in the daytime during a honey flow, or else just at dusk if there is not a flow. Always place a sheet of paper under the covers on top of wet combs.

Publications Reviewed

The "History of American Beekeeping," by Frank C. Pellett, is a most interesting and instructive book. It contains valuable information, which will have a special appeal to progressive beekeepers. The author is one of the leading world writers on beekeeping subjects. A few points taken from the book are:—

The World War brought great changes to American beekeeping, with emphasis on the production and

marketing of honey rather than on beekeeping as an interesting diversion as it long had been. The old-time beekeeper was something of a naturalist . . . the beekeeper is now a business man.

The wax moth has been mentioned in writings by Aristotle, 2,300 years ago.

The width now adopted for the spaces between wires of queen excluders is 165/1000ths of an inch. The wire excluder is now generally in use.

WANTED TO BUY

BAINES or Gibb Capping Melter.—Particulars to "Melter," c/o. N.Z. Honeybee.

HONEY-EXTRACTOR, 4-frame, hand or power, power preferred.—Write C/o "Honeybee."

HIGH-GRADE HONEY TINS

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Splendid, vigorous young three-frame nuclei, with summer-reared, prolific Italian untested queens for sale. Price 17/6 each on rail (cash with order. Special quotation for 50 or over.

Nuclei are ready for immediate delivery, orders being filled in rotation.

These nuclei will build up into full colonies next spring, and give gratifying crop results.

Order now. Deliveries made, at any date to suit clients.

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"WANTED" ADVERTISEMENTS:

SMALL ADVERTISEMENTS, classified under "For Sale," "Wanted to Buy," "Situations Vacant," are inserted at the rate of 2d per word per insertion. Replies may be sent C/o. "N.Z. Honeybee."

3,000 Italian QUEENS

SPRING DELIVERY

WONDERFUL HONEY GATHERERS

A NEW SERVICE TO PRODUCERS

Owing to the great difficulty experienced by Honey Producers in purchasing

SUPPLIES OF QUEENS IN EARLY SPRING

(due to unfavourable climatic conditions), we have decided to introduce a system that will overcome this difficulty.

We will, during the coming autumn,

REAR AND MATE 3,000 PURE-BRED ITALIAN QUEENS

from our Champion Breeder, "Clovergold Royal," whose colony stored

NINE SUPERS OF HONEY THIS SEASON

eight supers were removed, totalling 350 lbs.

A New South Wales honey-producer writing re an untested queen of this stock says:—

"Please send me five untested Italian queens at once, exactly the same stock as the one I got from you at the beginning of this season. They are GREAT HONEY GATHERERS, and quiet to handle.—O.R.T., Nowra, 23/1/39."

L.P.E., Nr. Toowoomba, Queensland, writes:—"The two nuclei, which arrived before Christmas, are doing well, and are great honey-gatherers. Please forward me at your earliest four Golden Italian Queen Bees (tested) and three leather-coloured Queens (tested ones)."

The 3,000 young queens will be wintered in strong 4-frame nuclei and will be shipped to clients on any date determined by them. (Safe delivery guaranteed.) This will give producers a valuable service, enabling them to make increase or requeen at the exact time most favourable to their districts.

Prices remain unaltered. Write for price list. Terms: 25 per cent. with order, balance before queens are despatched. (These terms apply only to the spring delivery of autumn-reared queens.) Special prices for large quantities.

Nuclei will also be available on any date required at old prices.

Book your orders NOW to secure these special queens for early spring delivery.

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