

NOTES OF INTERVIEW BETWEEN Mr. J. RENTOUL, REPRESENTING  
THE HONEY CONTROL BOARD, and HON. W. N. WORTHY, MINISTER  
OF AGRICULTURE, at WELLINGTON, 12th June, 1925.

Mr. Rentoul :- We require an amendment to the Act, or some assistance from the Government to enable us to take complete control of the export of honey. At the present time the bulk of the produce is going through an organisation controlled by the Bee-keepers' Association. Although the Control Board is not taking complete control there is still a certain amount of administrative cost to be borne, and that means the bulk of the producers have to suffer. If we took complete control we would have to carry on an organisation, and that would be practically duplicating the work of the Association: there would be two organisations. It is the general opinion that if it could be managed the time is approaching when we should transfer the Association to the Control Board. The idea is that the Board would function better than the Association, and there would be a great saving if we could take over the whole of the export of the Association altogether. This is where the difficulty arises: the Association has certain liabilities in London: they raised capital there, and the organising of the market has cost a good deal, and they have incurred liabilities, and the Association feel they cannot hand over the export without the Board taking over the liabilities. If the Control Board were starting where the Association started years ago they would have to go to the same expense. Those costs involve a fair amount of expenditure. The point I wish to stress is that we would like to find a way whereby the Control Board would take over the export business and this liability as the approximate cost of the market there. Whatever happens the producers have to meet that liability.

Hon. Minister:- You have power under the Act to take absolute control.

Mr. Rentoul:- We could take control, but if we have absolute control and eliminate the liability, with the Association still functioning we have two organisations.

Hon. Minister:- The National Dairy Association and the Dairy Control Board are both going on.

Mr. Rentoul:- Their position is different from ours. If we had absolute control just now and the Control Board handled the produce, the Association would first take over and the Control Board would take from the Association. If the Association were eliminated and no account taken of the money the Association owes in London, that money would have to be found by the Bee-keepers. I consider it is not a fair thing that the industry should bear the liability, because they have done a lot of work to build up the industry. There seem to be two ways in which the thing could be done: we could have the Act amended so that the Board would be enabled to take over this amount, viz. about £12,000. Another proposition is that the Government might assist the industry by subsidising the Board to that extent. The fruit people have had large considerations in that way: our industry has not been subsidised to any extent. If we could get this matter fixed up it would give the industry a big push along - if we could carry on as we are doing and meet this liability. We cannot take full control of the honey at present; it is going through the Association and being handled in a certain way at Home. There is one big line and then we have small lines going out. We have asked our Agents to deal with these as quickly as possible, but it is hard to adjust the sales satisfactorily to everyone. The Association at present is spending £2000 a year, putting on an organisation to handle in London. There are also

independent shipments. We are <sup>not</sup> taking independent shipments, and it is only a fair thing to help with the cost. The Board's object is to try and get a control that is uniform to handle all the honey.

Hon. Minister:- I cannot introduce an amendment this Session. The Lysnar affair is the result of bringing in small amendments.

Mr. Rentoul:- Is the question of a subsidy unreasonable?

Hon. Minister:- I do not want to commit myself to any subsidies if I can help it. It does not stop with one thing. You have a Control Board and you have power under the Act to take full control. I am not going to subsidise the Meat Board, the Dairy Control Board or the Fruit Board.

Mr. Rentoul:- Our position is different from the others in a way. We are a comparatively new industry: our export this year is 100 tons more than last year, and it is growing all the time. There was practically no export before 1914.

Hon. Minister:- You can have a talk with Dr Reakes and discuss the matter. I will think about the position; but I will not bring a Bill into the House, and I do not feel like subsidising. The Board has power to take absolute control and adjust the finances without any amendment.

Mr. Rentoul:- We have control, but under the present circumstances we do not propose to take full control. We would like to have power under the Act to take over the liabilities.

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Is it proposed to send  
a written reply to letter of  
7/4/25 in view of the  
Minister's definite statement  
to the deputation that he will  
not bring down legislation?  
H.H.  
22.6.25