

THE HONEY INDUSTRY.

To the Editor

Sir,—In your issue of Monday there appears a letter from our old friend John Murdoch of Ross and by the general tenor of it the bee-keepers seem to be "all out of step but our Jock."

In the first paragraph he states that he received a report by Messrs Stewart, Beckett and Co. on the financial position of the H.P.A. In passing I may state that that report was paid for by one or two apiarists near Christchurch whose sole ambition seems to be the downfall of the apiary business in New Zealand and because they cannot get their own way they are doing their best to ruin the industry for others.

He states that "after reading this report one wonders how the H.P.A. have been allowed by the Government to have control and direct all the operations of the Government Honey Control Board." The H.P.A. does not control the Honey Control Board. The chairman happens to be the manager of the H.P.A. Mr Butland, the Government nominee, is a leading member of the Auckland Chamber of Commerce and the other is your humble servant, who also happens to be a director on the Menzies Ferry Dairy factory, and according to Mr Murdoch's reasoning the H.P.A. must be running the latter business, too, seeing that he is also a director on the H.P.A.

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SOUTHLAND TIMES, ISSUE 21495,
10 SEPTEMBER 1931, PAGE 9

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If the Apiary Division costs the Government £4000 per annum, what has that got to do with the H.P.A. which is a co-operative company dealing in honey?

Mr Murdoch speaks of the industry getting into a state of stagnation. Does he not know that the honey industry is the only one that has maintained its prices throughout the slump? Mr Murdoch states that for two seasons now the Control Board has not exported any honey. Fortunately Mr Murdoch is wrong in his assertion, for we exported fifty tons last season and two hundred and sixty tons for the season just closed and the two seasons previous to that something like one thousand tons each year, and if we could have disposed of last season's and this year's crop locally, we would have relieved the Home market by just that much. Last year our local sales increased by 100 per cent., but Mr Murdoch doesn't mention that—it makes painful reading for our draper critics.

Mr Murdoch goes on to mix up the Honey Control Board and the H.P.A. with the local Marketing Scheme. Let me hasten to assure him and your readers that the (local) Marketing Scheme has no connection with the Honey Control Board or the H.P.A. It was mainly introduced and is being pushed by a number of Waikato bee-keepers who have cut the local market to pieces and are now trying to rescue something from the wreck.

Now for the enclosure signed by Stewart Beckett and Co.: It states: "The indebtedness to A. J. Mills increased to £106,835." Quite correct and when we transferred to J. E. Morton that firm paid to A. J. Mills the sum of £106,835. Would anyone suggest Moreton's Ltd., does not know how to run its affairs? The firm took stock in London and paid the hard cash, as it considered it was getting good value for its money. Messrs Stewart Beckett and Co., worked out the reports from a balance-sheet. Who is the best judge, the man with the goods or the one with the scrap of paper?—I am, etc.,

ROBERT GIBB.
