

# HONEY CONTROL

## Board's Results

### LOOKING BACKWARD.

(By John Murdoch, Ross).

The New Zealand Honey Control Board was formed at the instigation of the Honey Producers' Association. The Directors of the Association were members of the Board, and dictated the policy and management of the Control Board. When the Act was passed in November, 1924, it contained a clause to the effect that beekeepers who, previously to 1924, were exporting honey would not be debarred from continuing to export as usual.

Mr. Butland, Chairman of the Control Board, who called on me last October, admitted that the Board in 1925, had not given me a fair deal; and yet, when this season, I wrote to him for a permit to export honey to our own agents in Britain, he declined. This is what he says: "With reference to the question in your letter regarding the export of 100 cases of honey, you will appreciate that, under the Board's pooling system, it is impossible to allow any one producer to ship a quantity of honey outside the Board's pool, as the effect of this might bring about exactly the same position of uneconomical individual competition that the meeting in Greymouth expressed themselves so strongly against."

The present policy of control is certainly uneconomical, as when the Directors of the Association asked beekeepers to vote in favour of a Control Board being formed, they were promised better prices for their honey, and a reduction in the charges for marketing.

To-day, we find beekeepers are offered 1½d per lb. advance for their honey with a charge of 6 per cent interest, if they want the cash, until such time as the honey is sold. Beekeepers were not told that their honey would be pooled. They were not told that there would be no market in Britain for their honey. They were not told that they would not receive individual account sales for their honey. They were not told that the High Commissioner for New Zealand would not be able to cable out the market price for honey, as in the past.

Prior to Control coming into force, I had a registered export brand and an export license, but the Control Board refused to allow me to export direct, and said that I must export through them. Prior to control, one season I got 9d per lb., another season 8d, and the last season I got 7½d lb. Export charges ran into 9/10 a case. I shipped 60 cases this season (1923), and the charges were: Freight £15/10/4; insurance, 7/-; wharf charges £9/9/8; Commission £4/6/4. The following season, when I was compelled to ship through the Board, the

# HONEY CONTROL

GREY RIVER ARGUS, 4 APRIL 1935, PAGE 6

### Using This Item

Copyright undetermined - untraced rights owner. For advice on reproduction of material from this newspaper, please refer to the

[Copyright guide](#).

charges averaged twenty-one shillings and tenpence (21/10) per case. This included a charge of one penny per lb. for so-called advertising, but the Board could not produce any receipts for advertising my honey! I wrote the Directors in Auckland and they said this was a charge by A. J. Mills and Co., London, so, I wrote to Mills and Co., refusing to pay this charge, and this is their reply: "London, March 1926: Advertising: This amount has been debited in accordance with instructions received by us from the New Zealand Honey Control Board." Section 20 of the Honey Control Act says "There shall be payable by producers by way of a levy not exceeding a levy of one farthing a pound."

Last season grave dissatisfaction was caused Greymouth beekeepers when only about 33 cases of honey were passed by the Government Grader, out of 200 odd cases. I understand these drastic regulations have been relaxed since, but it would be interesting to find out who is to blame. If we had free marketing, I would be prepared to export all this honey which the Board refused to pass, and any that was like what I know Greymouth honey usually is like. I see no reason why I should not get a return of 6d per lb. for it. The Empire Marketing Board's Report into the retail marketing of honey says that "Imperial Bee" in 1lb jars was 1/4½d in London and 1/4 in Glasgow.

A visitor to New Zealand took home a 60lb. tin of Ross honey, and gave it to his mother. She gave her friends a taste, and they came back for more. Eventually she disposed of it for 1/- per lb., and now wants to know how she can get more!

A friend in England writes: "I am 79 years of age, so I have had a fairly good innings, and am thankful to be able to get about. That was some beautiful honey you sent me. It is quite equal in quality to our best English honey. I always understood that New Zealand honey was the best of the foreign honeys on our market."

Another letter from Chippenham, England, by a Bee Master and writer in a "Bee Journal" says: "I received the parcel of honey. Thank you for so kindly remembering me. It is very good honey—better than many samples of British honey. I have often thought I would like to taste New Zealand honey as it is considered superior to our own. The sample you sent is quite up to that standard of excellence."

Does it not make one think that it is time that the beekeepers of New Zealand should sit up and say: "We have had ten years of bungling with the honey industry, and we want a change." Sometime ago, I twitted the Greymouth beekeepers with being a "milk and water crowd, afraid to stand up for their rights." This reminds me of the maiden lady who was asked if she believed in women's

rights. She retorted that she would be contented if she could get some other women's "lefts." I am pleased to say that, recently, I have noticed beekeepers waking up to the fact that 1½d per lb. for their honey is not sufficient advance when it is retailing in England at from 1/4 to 1/9 per lb.

Does Mr. Hillary, the new Member of the Control Board, think that 1½d per pound is sufficient advance; and, if so, is the report true that he is asking the Auckland storekeepers 4½d per lb. for his honey?

The taxpayers of New Zealand, through the Control Board, gave £9000 to bolster up the Association, and lately another £6,000 of the taxpayers' money went to buy two words, "Imperial Bee," the brand of the late Honey Producers Association, now in liquidation. I would not give sixpence for this brand, as I have seen it returned by customers both in Christchurch and Wellington.

When Mr. Jordan was sent to the West Coast to induce beekeepers to take up shares, he told us that the Association wanted our lovely white honeys to blend with the dark honey in the North Island. Mr. Rentoul told us afterwards that it cost fivepence (5d) per pound to blend our honey! Then why blend honey at 5d a lb when the producer only gets an advance of 1½d? Recently, we saw an intimation in the press that the Cawthorn Institute in Nelson, were asked to experiment in the removal of undesirable flavours in honey. What is the good of this when the cost of removal is more than the value? Rank flavoured honey is sold for manufacturing purposes only.

Mr. Butland says that any producer can secure a vote by exporting 2 cwt. of honey within three years of an election, but I maintain that every beekeeper producing 2 cwt. of honey for sale, either in New Zealand or overseas, should have a vote. The producers of butter, and cheese can please themselves whether they sell in New Zealand or overseas. Mr. Butland also says that "Every branch of the National Beekeepers' Association in New Zealand, with the exception of the West Coast, has passed resolutions of confidence in the Board and its policy." How can Mr. Butland reconcile this statement with the fact that there are only about 130 producers of honey in New Zealand exporting their product? At one time I attended the annual Beekeepers' Conference, when I found the delegates a gentlemanly lot of fellows. I have asked several why they do not attend now, and the usual answer is "If you say a word against the Control Board's operations, you only get howled down!" Might I suggest that the Greymouth branch call a special meeting of beekeepers and invite representatives of the Farmers' Union, Chamber of Commerce, and

others who are interested in extending our industry and in enlarging our exports in a businesslike manner. A suitable date could be arranged by the Branch secretary, and after a free discussion a motion on these lines could be put to the meeting: "That, whereas only 130 producers of honey in New Zealand are eligible to vote out of a total of 8,000 beekeepers, this meeting humbly petitions the Minister of Agriculture to amend or abolish the Honey Control Act, as it is now obsolete."

Failing this, I would suggest that a vote be taken of the shareholders in the Honey Producers' Association giving them an opportunity of voting again after 10 years experience of control on these issues: "I vote that Control continue. I vote that Control be abolished. Strike out the line not wanted." Quite a number of men will contribute to the cost of printing and distribution of this vote. I would head the list with £5.