

BEEKEEPERS' INTERESTS DOMINION CONFERENCE

PAST SEASON REVIEWED

[FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT]

HAMILTON, Wednesday

Prior to the commencement of the conference of the National Beekeepers' Association this morning, the delegates were welcomed by the deputy-Mayor, Mr. H. D. Caro, who emphasised the importance of the industry to the Dominion.

Mr. J. A. Campbell, director of the Division of Horticulture, said the last year had been a difficult one, largely owing to the failure of the Honey Producers' Association. Although the association had failed as a commercial concern it had served a very useful purpose in improving the industry. Since it went into liquidation, the Honey Control Board had come into being and had had a difficult time owing to the amount of produce which came into its hands after the 1928-29 season. Mr. Campbell believed the industry had a bright future.

Referring to the importation of duty-free sugar for feeding bees, Mr. Campbell said the problem involved presented many difficulties owing to the doubt which existed as to the final destination of sugar purchased for beekeeping. Mr. Campbell suggested that low-grade honeys could be assembled, treated and distributed as bee feed.

Mr. E. A. Earp, senior apiary instructor, said in spite of the fact that there were only seven full-time instructors in New Zealand and no part-time instructors, the incidence of foul-brood was definitely on the decrease. About 90 per cent of the apiaries were free of the disease. He urged beekeepers to become voluntary inspectors who would be willing to co-operate with the instructors in eradicating the disease entirely.

In presenting the annual report, which was adopted, the president, Mr. C. A. Pope, said its activities had been well maintained. The association had endeavoured to have restored to at least its original level the duty on honey importations, but the efforts made, however, were unsuccessful. The Customs Department had benefited considerably at the expense of the industry by imposing a duty on sugar used for feeding bees. The association had advocated the remission of the duty, and the Customs Department had advised that it would come to a decision in the near future.

Claims for the eradication of ragwort, which was a menace to the industry, had been submitted to the Minister of Agriculture, who had replied that the Government had spent a large sum of money in endeavouring to rid the coun-

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money in endeavouring to rid the country of this noxious weed.

Continuing, Mr. Pope said the question of controlling the sale of honey on the local market was being investigated by the Executive Commission of Agriculture. It was hoped that the commission would recommend the adoption of the association's plans with the object of stabilising prices and conditions on the local market.

Owing to lack of funds, the system of part-time inspection had to be suspended, and there was no immediate prospect of a reinstatement of the system. An effort had been made to effect a reconciliation with the West Coast branch of the National Association, but without success. There were now 12 branches affiliated with the association.

The statement of accounts showed a credit balance of £41 15s.