

Stabilisation Needed For Honey Industry

BEEKEEPERS SEEK LEGISLATION

An important meeting of beekeepers was held at Palmerston North yesterday afternoon with a view to considering vitally important proposals affecting the future of the industry in the Dominion.

Support for the proposal to create a honey control board with power to fix the price at which producers should sell on the local market was urged by Mr. Wallace Nelson, of Otorohanga, president of the National Beekeepers' Association of New Zealand and also chairman of directors of N.Z. Honey, Ltd., which represents over 70 per cent. of the Dominion's commercial production of honey.

Mr. F. C. Raikes was in the chair and there was an attendance of approximately 30.

After hearing the address, the following resolution was passed:

"That this meeting of commercial honey producers—representing over 6000 hives of bees—conveys to the Government its emphatic protest against the inexcusable delay in granting the requests of the industry for the passing of legislation that will ensure to the producers and consumers the orderly marketing of honey at stabilised prices and grades under Government regulations."

Dealing with the future of the industry, Mr. Nelson proceeded to elucidate the proposals and to give information concerning the negotiations which have recently been conducted between the leaders of the industry and the Government concerning marketing.

Local Control Necessary.

He maintained that local control was necessary if the industry were to survive, as without it, competition among producers would soon spell disaster, while the wholesale and retail trade would be placed in a safe position as far as honey purchases were concerned, by reason of the fact that all would buy on the same terms.

The price factor and also the possibility of honey being imported from overseas should values become false, also protected the consumer.

Continuing, he said that another side to the proposal, and that was the creation of the proposed board, would provide a body which would give security to the Government for an advance of £10,000 which the liquidators of the

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MANAWATU TIMES, VOLUME 60, ISSUE 161, 11
JULY 1935, PAGE 9

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defunct Honey Producers' Association were prepared to accept in payment of the debt of £15,000 owing by beekeeper members.

Those beekeepers who had to find this money, he explained, would then be given 10 years to pay off the amounts owing. This arrangement would save from bankruptcy many who at present were unable to meet the demands of the liquidator.

A levy of $\frac{1}{4}$ d per lb. on all honey sold would provide the board with the necessary funds to enable it to operate, and this, it would be recognised, would be a small price to pay for a stabilised market.

In conclusion, the speaker paid a tribute to the efforts of Mr. W. J. Polson, M.P., who, he said, had repeatedly directed the attention of the Government on the floor of the House to the serious plight of the honey industry.

Petition Is Presented.

Mr. Nelson submitted a petition to be presented to the Executive Commission of Agriculture. The proposals to be supported were:

(1) That one board shall exercise control of both the local and export markets in order to avoid the clashing of authority and unnecessary duplication of expense; (2) that the present Honey Export Control Board shall automatically act as the first Honey Control Board under the new authority, until the next December 31 after such new authority becomes legally exercisable; (3) that the proposed Honey Control Board under the new authority be constituted and elected as provided in the Honey Export Control Act, 1924 (one producers' representative to retire each year), except that the qualifications of voters for the election of producers' representatives on such board shall be as follows:—(4) Any beekeeper who shall be the registered owner of over 10 colonies of bees shall be termed a "producer," and any and every "producer" shall be entitled to one vote for every 25 colonies of bees he owns. (7) In order to extinguish the debt due to Messrs C. and E. Morton, Ltd., by the N.Z. Co-operative Honey Producers' Association, Ltd. (in liquidation), we approve of the arranging of a long-term loan of £10,000. The liability due to Messrs C. and E. Morton, Ltd., is having a most detrimental general effect upon the industry and has very greatly increased the serious financial position of honey producers, which, in common with that of all primary producers, is due to the world-wide and long-continued depression; (6) this loan

will free all producer-debtors of the N.Z. Co-operative Honey Producers' Association, Ltd. (in liquidation), from urgent pressure for payment, and enable the balances due by such debtors to be spread over a long period of years free of interest. The small instalments then due by such debtors will be collected annually and be credited to the proposed loan of £10,000. The relief to producer-debtors will result in immeasurable benefit to the industry, and assist measures to stabilise the marketing of honey; (7) that to provide for the proposed Honey Control Board, a levy be made up to 3d per lb. on all honey sold in the Dominion to retailers, and levy to also take the place of the present levy on exports for the administrative purposes of the existing board; (8) that the levy be collected by means of levy stamps to be affixed to packages of honey sold by retailers, such stamps to be sold by all Post Offices in the Dominion; (9) that the proposed Honey Control Board shall undertake propaganda and well-planned advertising to increase consumption of honey in the Dominion; (10) that the proposed Honey Control Board, in order to secure to producers for their honey the fair costs of production and a reasonable profit, shall determine (a) the prices at which bulk honey shall be sold and (b) the prices at which packed honey shall be sold to retailers (direct or through merchants); (11) we would urge that the prices to retailers be kept as low as possible and that the prices to consumers be left to open retail competition to determine; (12) that the Honey Control Board determine such grade definitions as are required to be printed on honey labels to denote the quality of the honey.

The petition to the Commission, to delegate to the honey industry the full powers necessary for the exercising of complete control of the marketing of honey within New Zealand, was approved by the meeting, which did not take the individual clauses into consideration in this resolution. The petition was signed by a number present.

Tribute to Board.

That this meeting of commercial honey producers views with satisfaction the operations of the Export Control Board and appreciated the able guidance of the chairman, Mr. J. Britland, in the board's business and conveys its thanks to him for valuable personal assistance to place the local marketing of honey on a sound basis," was a further resolution that was carried.