

Successful Field Day Held By Northern Beekeepers

Practical demonstrations and addresses by officers of the Honey Control Board and the Internal Marketing Division were given at the apiary of Mr. H. R. Holdaway, Old Onerahi Road, Whangarei, on Saturday.

About 70 producers from as far north as the Bay of Islands to as far south as Taranaki, were present at this field day, which was held under the auspices of the Northland Beekeepers' Association.

Beekeeping is an industry of growing importance in the Dominion, and particularly in Northland, and the visit of the Departmental officials, it was felt, would do much to further the interest of the industry here, as well as to improve the standards of beekeeping and the quality of the product.

Important Experiments

The president of the association (Mr. J. Gavin) welcomed the visitors, and referred to matters concerning the association, and its close relationship with the various departments represented. He outlined the progress of the association, which had been partly instrumental in carrying out three important experiments on the complete analysis of locally produced honey, humidity tests, and a trial shipment of 20 combless packages of bees. These were shipped to Otago last year with a view to testing the possibility of package bees producing a crop of honey comparative with a crop from over-wintered hives in Otago.

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Mr. Gavin also referred to the satisfactory position regarding diseases of bees in the district.

An address and practical demonstration dealing with the production side of the industry was then given by the Department's apiary instructor (Mr. L. Riesterer).

The advantages of having a good strain of bees and the necessity for re-queening to maintain colony strength during the seasonal flow of nectar, was stressed by Mr. Riesterer.

Rearing of Queens

He demonstrated the art of grafting larvae for the purpose of rearing queens from the same eggs that would otherwise be hatched into working bees. Transferring needles were used and the bee in the pupa stage was placed into special cells, ultimately built into queen cells for the hatching of queens from a specially selected strain.

Marketing

The local and overseas marketing of honey was dealt with by the Government representative of the Honey Control Board (Mr. W. Nelson). He asked for the co-operation of beekeepers to prevent competitive selling, and to ensure that ample supplies of honey would be forthcoming.

It was pointed out that while beekeepers were free to sell their honey to whom they pleased, the Division was operating solely in the interests of beekeepers, and working expenses only were defrayed from receipts, the rest going back to the beekeepers.

Mr. Nelson gave a practical demonstration of the use of the queen excluder, explaining his method of supering hives and preventing the queen from having access to the surplus honey extracted. The object was to

honey extracted. The object was to prevent the queen from laying eggs in the combs of honey which should be kept exclusively for the purpose of extraction.

Up-to-date Plant

He referred to the new building nearing completion in Auckland, where the honey section would be stationed within the next few months. The most up-to-date plant would be installed for the grading, blending and packing of honey for overseas and local markets.

The manager of the honey section of the Internal Marketing Department (Mr. J. Rentoul) explained the marketing position, but confined his remarks chiefly to the difficulties that were encountered through the receipt of honey that was not properly packed or was not in a suitable condition for blending.

Both Mr. Nelson and Mr. Rentoul answered many questions put by the producers, and the meeting passed a resolution expressing complete satisfaction in the efforts of the Control Board and the Internal Marketing Division to stabilise and free the market from harmful competitive selling.

Mr. Stoupe, of the Internal Marketing Department, conveyed the thanks of the visitors to Mr. and Mrs. Holdaday and the members of the association who had contributed largely towards the success of the field day. He also expressed thanks to Mrs. Holdaway and her willing helpers who provided luncheon and afternoon tea during the day.