

# Beekeepers angry

(N.Z. Press Association)

HAMILTON,  
December 1.

**Coromandel Peninsula beekeepers are angry because both commercial and private concerns have 15 days left to clear all hives from the area.**

The move was ordered by the Ministry of Agriculture after 11 reported cases of poisoning from Coromandel comb honey last summer.

The Ministry has threatened to enforce the order by burning any hives left in the area.

## REFUSAL

Commercial keepers are busy preparing for the move, and most plan to put their hives on the Hauraki plains. But many private owners have opposed the order and say they will refuse access to Ministry officers.

The beekeepers are angry about what they say is lack of consultation by the Ministry, and many say that the

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PRESS, VOLUME CXIV, ISSUE  
33706, 2 DECEMBER 1974, PAGE 2

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issue has been blown out of all proportion.

A Coroglen beekeeper, Mr D. Hansen, said the Ministry could have helped keepers avoid the risk of poisoning.

Although deaths from the tutu honey poisoning had been reported as far back as the turn of the century, no research had been done into the problem. Cases of poisoning had almost disappeared until the last two summer seasons, Mr Hansen said.

#### 'NOT TOLD'

"The first case for many years occurred at Whangamata the summer before last. But we didn't learn of that case until we were in the midst of the problem ourselves."

Eight cases of poisoning were traced to Mr Hansen's Wilderland store and he was preparing to move his hives before the Government order.

However the move was only a short-term answer "fraught with difficulties," he said.

Tutu poisoning was likely in very hot, drought-like conditions when an insect called the passion vine hopper was active.

The insect sucked tutu leaves and tender shoots and left a small, sweet, poisonous deposit on the leaves. In hot conditions, other flowers died off and the bee turned to the tutu, picking up the poison.

The poison seemed to be dangerous in only comb honey, as the deposit was too diluted in extracted honey.