

53/5/4

31st May, 1936.

Geo. Toogood, Esq., Jnr.,
Whiterig,
QUEEN.

Dear Sir,

Re Adansoni Bees.

Further to mine of the 17th January last:

As indicated in my letter to you, I wrote to the Department of Agriculture and Forestry, Pretoria, South Africa, for information covering the above race of bees, and have received the following reply,-

"This Department does not sell indigenous queen bees, but only Italian queen bees. The queens, which we are rearing at present for distribution to beekeepers, are progeny of Italian queen bees imported from the United States of America in 1936. From experiments on a small scale, which have been carried out in the departmental apiary, Pretoria, there seems very little to choose between this strain of honey-bee and the indigenous bee, taking into account the honey-gathering potentialities of the two strains.

The adansoni race closely resembles Italian bees in general appearance, but the workers are smaller and somewhat differently coloured. In the adansoni race the scutellum is yellowish brown in colour. The docility of the adansoni bees varies. In some districts they are very docile and can easily be handled. In other districts, on the other hand, the bees are known for their viciousness. The indigenous bees seem to be able to resist disease. European foul brood is present in South Africa, but it has by no means become a serious disease. The pure adansoni race is certainly an excellent one for South African conditions, but its characteristics vary considerably in different parts of the country.

The only beekeeper in South Africa, who I know rears indigenous queen bees, is Mr. J.D. van der Merwe, Triple Apiaries, P.O. Politei, Northern Transvaal. On receipt of your letter I wrote to Mr. van der Merwe, to find out whether he would be able to supply indigenous queens, and the following is an extract from his letter:-

"I am glad to say that since engaging in beekeeping in this country I have also diligently tried to improve the quality of my bees. For three years now I have selected from the apiary the one colony that had the best all round characteristics, and from this

colony, I have bred queens for requeening the entire apiary and a few I sold to those who wanted them. Unfortunately the mating of the young virgins is entirely a matter of chance as there are hundreds of wild swarms throughout the forests. But taking everything into consideration my queens are a decided improvement to what I had when I first started with them.

This year, on account of a severe illness which kept me in bed for nearly three months, I have not requeened with the result that many of my strongest colonies have swarmed and I expect little surplus from them as the main working force have absconded with the old queens.

As regarding my price I charge 7/6 each for young laying queens. I do not however guarantee their purity. Inside the Union I guarantee safe delivery, but outside the Union and foreign countries my responsibility ceases when I have delivered the queen bees to the postal authorities. No queen bees are sent C.O.D. nor on credit. Cash must accompany orders. I always have a number of young queens on hand, so that unless the order is an exceptionally large one, I am always able to fill it immediately."

I trust the abovementioned information will be of use to you."

Yours faithfully,

COPY

J. A. CAMPBELL,

Director of the Horticulture
Division.