



BRANCH NOTES

“Refrain not to speak when there is occasion to do good.”

SOUTH AUCKLAND

South Auckland beekeepers have had their opinions confirmed regarding the use of hormone weedkillers, and 2,4-D in superphosphates.

The South Auckland branch received a letter at a recent meeting from Dr. E. J. Dyce, professor of apiculture, Cornell University, U.S.A.

He said that, as far as he had been able to determine, 2,4-D is not toxic to bees, but it certainly plays havoc with clovers and the secretion of nectar in practically all honey-producing flora. The drifting of even a slight amount of 2,4-D on flora apparently stops nectar secretion. Even though the plants do not appear to be damaged, nectar secretion is stopped, Dr. Dyce said.

The branch considered that farmers should be acquainted with the serious repercussions which could result from the application of 2,4-D or toxic pesticides during November, December and January. The regeneration of pastures could be retarded, and the production of clover seed, which is so important in the fattening of stock, could practically cease.

—Straight Furrow, 19/10/1960.

HAWKES BAY

Here's an item of news which I saw last week for the first time: We in the North Island don't look upon the little brown-back ant (about 3/16in long) as a very troublesome critter. There are the rare occasions when they have scented out the locality of a pot of jam, or in my case a thin black line of them came up the front door steps, crossed the hall into the kitchen and found their way to a 60lb tin of honey where many met a gooey death, but

others returned home to tell the tale.

Yesterday at somebody's apiary, there was seen a strange procession of a whole regiment of ants going in and out of a hive entrance and they were carrying out hundreds of eggs (bees) and larvae—two or three days old from the egg stage. To help the bees to hold the fort for the present, a super was removed to crowd the bees.

Today, I went there with a shovel to turn over the soil, some waste oil to soak four bricks with, and the bearers of the bottom board would be oiled also. To my surprise—not an ant could be seen—either their nefarious occupation had been too much for their conscience, or our disturbance of the hive, gave them an ominous feeling. A domestic beekeeper at Wairoa has to take the precaution of placing the legs of the honeytank stand in tins of water, and this keeps the ants out.

The days are now almost hot, swarm-cells are appearing, so we are all busy at something, when not cutting lawns.

—Contributed.

CANTERBURY

Bees buzzing fitfully in the background provided a realistic setting for the annual spring field day of the Canterbury branch, held in a sheltered garden on the premises of the Rangiora beekeepers, Miss M. A. Shepherd and Mr. Clarrie Hill. Occasionally the bees flitted among the spectators seated on forms arranged on the lawn, and one man pulled his coat over his head.

The field day attracted an attendance of more than 100 with visitors from the West Coast, Nelson, Marlborough and South Canterbury. Among these were a number who engage in beekeeping as a spare-time hobby. These included a Timaru printer and a station employee from the Clarence bridge district.

Miss Shepherd, on whose premises the field day was held, followed proceedings from a wheel chair. She has been beekeeping for more than 50 years and before she began collecting honey she was a queen breeder and imported queens from America. The president of the branch, Mr. P. R. Robins, of Tai Tapu, recalled having attended a field day 30 years ago when Miss Shepherd was secretary.

Mr. Clarrie Hill has been associated with Miss Shepherd for 30 years and the partnership now has some 900 hives. Mr. Hill conducted the visitors over his honey house with its large extractor, honey tanks, a machine for taking off about a ton of honey a day in 1lb and 2lb pots and storage facilities with provision for warming the honey.

Alan Hill, Mr. Hill's young son, gave one of the practical demonstrations of the field day. It was of the electric embedding of sheets of foundation wax on wire frames. The wires when heated electrically fuse into the wax.

In opening the field day Mr. W. H. Gillespie, M.P., said that he had hives from Miss Shepherd and Mr. Hill on his property to help him with his white clover, emphasising the interdependence of the general farmer and the beekeeper. Mr. Gillespie said that the field day was largely educational in character and as in other branches of farming it was essential in beekeeping for beekeepers to keep abreast with scientific developments to hold their place in the world.

Spectators looked with a good deal of admiration on a demonstration of wiring of frames without use of tacks or hammer, usually considered tools of trade in this operation, by Mr. E. W. Elliott, of Amberley.

The impact of labour-saving devices on beekeeping was brought home by a demonstration by Mr. Kevin Ecroyd of a mechanical loader which lifted three boxes of honey on a pallet and carried them up a ramp on to a truck. Spectators said that the loader could be a great boon to beekeepers in moving hives, which was normally a job for two men.

Mr. F. Armstrong, of Cashmere, was judged winner of a competition for the best idea or gadget displayed at the field day. Mr. T. E. Pearson, of Darfield, explained that the Sargeant Memorial Cup for this competition had been given for the most points in the



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N. Z. BEEKEEPER

honey section in the Christchurch show, but because of waning support for the section the Canterbury A. and P. Association had asked for a ruling on the future of the trophy. The Beekeepers' Association had decided to repossess the cup and award it for this competition at the field day.

Mr. Armstrong's exhibit was a spring clip with neatly filed and indexed articles on beekeeping extracted from the "Journal of Agriculture." Among exhibits in this section was a miniature fence to keep destructive mice out of beehives. An exhibit which also aroused interest, was a flimsy grey wasp net as started by a queen wasp after coming out of hibernation. It was brought to the field day from Blackball.

Mr. Pearson, representative of the National Beekeepers' Association on the new Agricultural Chemicals Board which came into operation this year, said he believed that with some precautions beekeepers could live with these chemicals which were of great benefit to farming and the country as a whole.

—"Christchurch Press."

WEST COAST

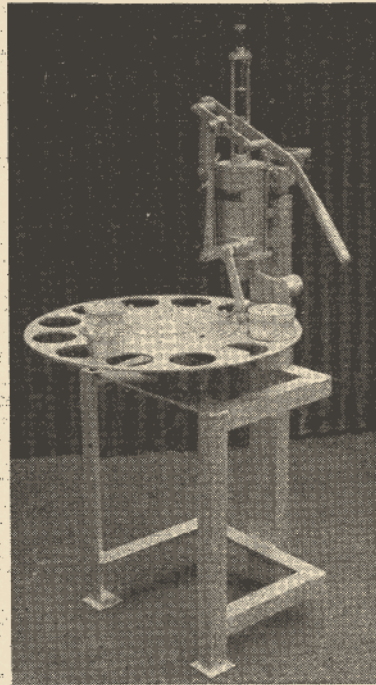
Late autumn on the Coast was mild and the bees, particularly those colonies headed by yellow queens, kept breeding well on to winter. There was no very dirty weather and I believe we had the best conditions for the whole of New Zealand.

Spring blossom came early. Willow (although there is not much here) finished mid-September. I do not remember ever having seen such a show of kowhai and clematis; some valleys looked as if there had been a fall of snow, and the blossom lasted well.

The result of all this good weather was that the spring inspection showed large quantities of field bees, and in many cases insufficient stores.

Rata, that tantalising bloom, is again playing tricks. Deer cullers and bush men have brought home evidence that it commenced to bloom in mid-October and they report plenty of flowers in some high areas. This is most unusual as it seldom appears much before mid-December. I do not know whether the bees are working if or not. Another week and birch, kamahi, etc., will be plentiful.

NOVEMBER 1960



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