



54  
3  
10

MEMBERS: BEEH, 1932  
AGRICULTURAL: BEEH, 1932; BEEH, 1932



LONDON OFFICE  
HONEYBEE HOUSE  
105-107 MARK LANE  
LONDON, E.C.3

*N.E. Honey Control Board*

*Auckland Ltd.*

*New Zealand*

29th  
MAY  
1937.

Director-General of Agriculture  
**REFERRED.**  
31 MAY 1937  
*10/11*

THE HON. E. LEE MARTIN,  
Minister of Agriculture,  
WELLINGTON. C.I.

Dear Sir,

*Telephone*

I appreciate your suggestion to the CHRISTCHURCH PRESS that they refer to me a letter written by Mr. Bray for publication.

I ascertained that this letter had been sent to four papers, and was able to arrange that its publication be withheld pending my reply.

The letter is typical of Mr. Bray, who is not a member of the National Beekeepers Association, of N.E. Honey Ltd. or an exporter through the Control Board.

It is bad enough for me to have to spend the time answering stuff like this without your being bothered with it, and I have therefore deliberately avoided mentioning that the matter has been thoroughly discussed with the Government.

Yours faithfully,  
N.E. HONEY CONTROL BOARD

*Chairman*

Chairman.

*JRB*  
*2.6.37*

JRB/ECM.  
ENCL.

P.  
Y.

THE PRESS

CHRISTCHURCH N.Z.

Copy of letter signed by W.B. BRAY, to the Editor  
of "The Press" from Mr. W.B. Bray.

---

"I write to direct the attention of those interested in honey production to the dangers that threaten our industry through the unconstitutional action of the Honey Control Board in bringing Australian honey to both our local and export market. A few years ago the Board, determined to give the British consumer what he wanted, i.e. the best of our production, took steps to tighten up the grading regulations to a point where it became unprofitable to producers of certain flavours from native flora to export their honey. I know of one long-established producer who, as a result, went out of the business. Assuming that such a policy was correct, how does it compare with the present policy? The honeys concerned are certainly rank flavoured as compared with clover honey, the standard aimed at, but they do not approach in rankness the general run of Australian honey. Australian producers have repeatedly failed to establish their honey in the British market, which, though it accepts other flavoured honeys, fights shy of the peculiar gum flavour. Australian consumers, knowing no other, are satisfied, but even they object to the strongest flavours, so that producers there are faced with an accumulation, under their marketing schemes, of strong flavoured honey most difficult to sell at any price.

A member of the Board recently went to Sydney and arranged for the purchase of several hundred tons of this honey, the price presumably being the lure. The trouble caused by the leakage in the initial consignment is nothing to that caused by the leakage of news concerning the transaction. The Board may have hoped to keep it quiet but our producers have a right to know what is being done. As a result of the protests made by some producers, the Board has disposed of some to a local packing organisation which is spoiling New Zealand honey with it under a label denoting a blend of New Zealand and British honey, a half truth which is tantamount to a

lie. The remainder has been shipped home by the Board. What the beekeeping public want to know is why the Board went to the extra expense of shipping through Auckland if they intended to be frank about the source of the honey?

Is the Board carrying out its determination to give the British consumer what he wants? Presuming that he will welcome the change of flavour, will he not look to Australia for future supplies. The same applies to the New Zealand consumer. Either the Board is showing the cat the way to the cream (if the honey is a bargain) or it is setting up consumer resistance to honey by giving him something he does not like, in which case the honey is dear at any price. In my opinion the whole business is so unsatisfactory that it warrants the suspension of the Board and the immediate setting up of some tribunal competent to call for the production of all the evidence. As further shipments are to follow, producers should individually press for urgent action before irreparable damage is done. We want to know who finds the money for these deals and also what the Government is doing to prevent such twinny-dingling with the goodwill of our markets.

(Signed) W.B. BRAY

26th May, 1937.

A letter dealing with Honey business written by Mr. W.B. Bray, was referred to Mr. J.R. Butland, Chairman of the Honey Control Board, who made the following statement :-

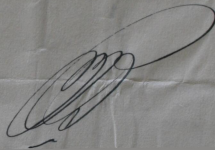
"The letter amounts to a collection of inaccurate statements typical of the type of criticism which has been levelled at the Board by this gentleman in the past. Dealing with the points raised -

1. The Board has not and is not likely to engage in any unconstitutional action.
2. The Board has not, and is not likely, to bring any Australian honey into the local market. It has neither jurisdiction in, nor control of, the New Zealand market.
3. The Board did take steps to adjust the grading regulations but instead of this proving unprofitable it has proved to be immensely profitable to the whole industry, as disclosed by the Board's pay-out.
4. A member of the Honey Control Board (an expert on Honey grading) certainly did go to Australia, and there has never been any secret about this. It must be perfectly obvious that his mission was not for the purpose of purchasing "rank flavoured" Australian honey. The Board did not purchase several hundred tons of honey. There is no secrecy surrounding the Board's business and the gentleman well knows this, and in due time, which will be at the conference of the National Beekeepers' Association in Wellington in June, the reason for the Board's representative's visit to Australia will be disclosed to the industry.
5. The letter further states that as a result of protests made by some producers, the Board has disposed of some (presumably he means Australian honey), to a local packing organisation. The Board has neither imported into, nor has it sold a pound of honey to anyone in New Zealand.
6. The suggestion that the Board may have brought honey through New Zealand for the purpose of avoiding a disclosure of its source of origin shows a lamentable lack of knowledge. Honey exported from either New Zealand or Australia cannot enter the British market without a proper declaration of the country of origin.
7. It is true that the Board determined, some years ago, to give the British consumer what he wants. The results have been reflected in record sales and record prices, and any action the Board may take will have as its objective the maintenance of the above results.

8. Regarding the nonsense about "showing the cat the way to the cream", I have already stated the Board did not and is not likely to be interested in importing honey into the New Zealand market.

The Honey Control Board has and always will give the industry the fullest information concerning its activities on their behalf and no innuendo in the Press from Mr. Bray, who incidentally is not an exporter, will cause exporters to think otherwise. Whatever action the Board has taken or is likely to take to preserve the goodwill of New Zealand honey on the British market will be taken with a full knowledge of the conditions existing and those for whom the Board acts well know that all the facts of the Board's business are available to them.

Suggestions from Mr. Bray as to what course should be taken to protect the goodwill of New Zealand honey on the British market are quite unnecessary, for the Board having built such goodwill is more concerned than Mr. Bray in its preservation.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and curves, located in the lower right quadrant of the page.