

GREAT LOSSES FROM FOUL

▲ ▲ ▲ BROOD ▲ ▲ ▲

A VALUABLE LETTER FROM NEW ZEALAND

—W.M. McEvoy.

Enclosed please find a copy of a letter received from a bee-keeper in New Zealand who is and has been sorely troubled with foul brood. By publishing Mr. Stevenson's letter and my explanations why he failed to cure his apiary of foul brood, it may be the means of helping many of the unfortunates to cure their apiaries of that disease.

Waerengaahika, Gisborne,
New Zealand, June, 1891.

Mr. W. McEvoy.

Dear Sir.—I am exceedingly obliged to you for taking the trouble to write me so long and valuable a letter. About a year ago I read a preliminary article of yours in the *American Bee Journal* on foul brood and after some delay a further article was to appear giving your method of curing the disease. Why, I do not know, but that number of the *Journal*, which I had been getting regularly from A. I. Root with *Gleanings* miscarried.

When I started keeping bees in 1883, there was no such thing as foul brood known in this district, and a great number of hives were kept all in box hives. I was the first to use frame hives and an extractor. In 1884 foul brood appeared in a large apiary of 500 hives, and in two years not a hive was left. Gradually it crept up the country, and next year I noticed it in one of my hives, which I destroyed, but in the following spring the early brood was all diseased. By removing these frames, however, all the summer brood seemed healthy. Meantime another box hive apiary of 400 hives, two miles off, was struck and the owner let it run riot, throwing out rotten combs in heaps for the bees to feast on, and spread destruction to every hive. Soon silence reigned in that apiary also, and I was left in possession of the field. At this time the Cheshire cure was all the talk, and I worked away spraying and medicating combs, but with no effect. It only got worse. I was now reduced to fifty hives, and when these swarmed I hived the swarm on foundation, and after a second swarm issued shook the bees remaining in the hive into the swarm and destroyed the combs. This checked the trouble for a time. Next year I had very strong hives and increased my stock to 300, securing a crop of nine

tons. That was three seasons ago. The spring following (1892), many of the hives had foul brood, and in the autumn, as recommended by D. A. Jones in his book, I shifted them all into empty hives, and fed them on sugar syrup. The weather was fine but the honey flow had entirely ceased, and I found it impossible to prevent the bees from getting at the honey taken from them. They drew out the foundation I gave them and seemed to be wintering all right. But when spring came they dwindled away, and I had only forty hives left in the home apiary, and seventy in an out apiary two miles away. These I did not interfere with and they wintered much better.

Last summer I had every intention when the flow came, to adopt your method, but such a season was never known here before. I hope we will not have another like it. The early spring was fine, but in October rain set in and continued day after day till the middle of January, so that working with bees was impossible, and we never had a honey flow at all. In January and February I extracted a little honey brought in chiefly by the hybrids, about twenty-five hundred-weight in all, the smallest crop I ever had from so many hives.

For years we had only the black bee, but I now get Italian queens from America, and hope next season to work out the black strain. I find an immense difference in their honey producing qualities. I have all along paid great attention to the get-up of my honey, and the result is that my brand is well known in the large towns, and my only difficulty is in producing enough to fill my orders. I have also been successful at taking awards at every exhibition in Wellington, Dunedin and Melbourne, and by request of the Government I had a display in the Colonial Exhibition in 1886.

Now to answer your questions about New Zealand as a honey-producing country.

The coast line running from north to south, nearly 1000 miles, there are all sorts of climates, sub-tropical in the north and somewhat bleak in the south. In the north are great forests, and all the trees are more or less honey-bearing. In its natural state there are no flowers on the ground in New Zealand, as in some parts of Australia, it is all overhead. The swamps are full of flax which yield immense quantities of honey, but of rank flavor, and it may be said of New Zealand bush honey in general that there is plenty of it, but the quality is poor.

In rich alluvial plains, such as this district the bush has disappeared, the swamps are drained, and the whole country is laid down in rye grass and clover as pasture for sheep and cattle. The climate is mild and