

not be obtained. The results as shown are by no means the most favourable ones obtainable; but, were they not so favourable by many degrees, they would tend to show apiculture to be an important industry, well worthy of every assistance in any shape that could be given for its establishment.

I have, &c.,

C. T. WREN.

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No. 24.

Mr. C. T. WREN to the Commissioners on Native Industries.

GENTLEMEN,—

Remuera, Auckland, 7th May, 1880.

It may probably be early, and would be premature, to detail arrangements *re* importing the Italian bees, but it occurred to me that the matter would probably be facilitated by my making suggestions as follows: Supposing the Government should apportion £500 for this purpose, I would suggest that, say, £350 of this sum should be available for the purchase of the bees and travelling and incidental expenses. Should I not be successful, I should require no remuneration for my time (some three months) and trouble; but, should I succeed, I suggest that the remaining £150 should be awarded me for my services. On arrival of the bees in the colony, I would suggest that half of them should be at once distributed, to the order of the Government, to bee-keepers in different parts of the colony, the remaining half to be placed in my own apiary to breed from; and, as the queens can be bred, that I should supply, also to the order of Government, to bee-keepers in all parts of the colony queens packed and forwarded, to the extent of 100, at 7s. 6d. each. Should the Government grant a further sum of £100 or £200, such extra money to be used solely in the purchase of an extra quantity of bees, giving me permission to use not exceeding one-fourth of such sum in assistance on the voyage if I should consider that it offered additional chances of success. Should the Government require security (although I am now pretty well known), I would give security to the extent of £500 or £1,000.

I have, &c.,

C. T. WREN.

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No. 25.

EXTRACTS ON BEE-CULTURE, furnished to the Commissioners on Native Industries by C. T. WREN, Remuera, Auckland.

At present the Italians are by far the most profitable bees we have, and even the hybrid have shown themselves so far ahead of the common bee that we may safely consider all discussions on the matter at an end. "The pure Italian, where they have not been enfeebled by choosing light-coloured bees to breed from, are ahead of any admixture." Among my eighteen colonies was one Italian. To find out the difference between blacks and Italians, I put in section-boxes for Italians and also for two black colonies. I noticed no difference between them when I commenced the trial. When the honey season had passed and the result was inspected, I had 50 lb. from the Italian hive and 30 lb. from each black hive; some of the rest had 8 or 10 lb. surplus honey, and some had gathered nothing. From the Italian colony I had, besides the 50 lb. of honey, two swarms after the sections had been removed. In ordinary seasons, red clover is as profitable a crop for the farmer as wheat, and, with proper management, if we have Italians, or even hybrids, there is no better honey-plant in any part of the world. It may be remarked here that, whereas the red-clover fields are not of the slightest use to the common bee, their proboscis being unable to reach the nectar in the flowers, the Italians find in them abundant and rich pasturage. A correspondent writes, "Give me Italian bees rather than blacks. Last season was my first year, but I find that, side by side, Italians will work earlier and later, and make more honey and of a nicer quality, especially in the fall: while my black bees were bringing in dark honey, the Italians were making a good quality, but a shade darker than white-clover honey."

It is my impression the Italians will eventually take the place of common bees, even if we let them alone. I judge so from seeing so many beautifully-marked Italians among the wild bees in the woods; and we frequently find as nicely-marked Italians in bee-trees as we can get from any apiary. The fact that the Italians will thrive where the blacks will starve will without doubt enable them in time to almost if not entirely supplant the natives, even if both races should be let alone.

"My Italian queen, which I bought of you on 15th June, has now enough provision for winter and some to spare, and the hive is full of golden bees; while the black swarm hived the same day that I received the Italian queen has not half as much honey or bees either. With the same chances the Italians will more than double the blacks. I have ten stands of bees, nine black and one Italian. The Italian queen I bought of D. S. Given late in the summer. Not any of the blacks have been seen out of late, but the Italians are out early and late to work for dear life. I think more of that one stand than of all the rest; and then they are so tame and active that it is a pleasure to handle them. I want nothing but Italians after this year. Bees, all through this part of the country, have not made honey enough (on average) to keep them, except the Italians."

The comparative advantages of the black or common bees and the Italians is a matter that no longer admits of discussion, and I must consider the very few individuals who write in favour of the former as belonging to the class of unfortunates who seem to delight in being contrary. If tons of honey are to be considered as proof, the matter has long ago been amicably settled in favour of Italians.

The bee-moth need hardly be mentioned now, unless it is to advise you to drive them out with Italians; for whenever they come into a neighbourhood the moths get out without any further trouble or bother. This one feature alone is enough to justify introducing Italian queens in place of the blacks.

The foregoing are a few items showing the great superiority of the Italian bees; but their advantages are so generally accepted wherever they are introduced that but little writing is now necessary. Bee-culture on any profitable scale is not and cannot be carried out without them in these days of competition: with them the industry has assumed very large proportions.

C. T. WREN.