



Eva Crane Trust

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To all those from other countries, the Congress provided an opportunity of seeing Dutch cities and canals, Dutch architecture and pictures—and of eating Dutch food! To the Dutch themselves I think it brought a certain pride to be able to present their own country for inspection, so vigorous and prosperous only four years after the occupation ended, and, it seemed to us, so miraculously healed—except in the hearts of the people—from ravages of war. The Congress also brought, to those in the Netherlands who organized it, an enormous amount of hard work both beforehand and during its course. The smoothness with which the proceedings were conducted was a tribute to the efficiency—and courtesy—of those who made and supervised the arrangements.

Nearly three hundred people attended the Congress, representing in all twenty countries. As far as personnel was concerned it was essentially a Western-European Congress, and less than 3% came from other continents than Europe. However, one delegate from the U.S.A., Mr. J. I. Hambleton, played a very important part throughout the Congress. The approximate numbers of those attending the Congress are given below :

Australia	...	3
Austria	...	5
Belgium	...	17
Denmark	...	3
Egypt	...	1
Eire	...	2
Finland	...	3
France	...	37
Germany	...	10
Great Britain	...	63
Israel	...	2
Italy	...	5
Luxemburg	...	3
Netherlands	...	56
Norway	...	4
Spain	...	3
Sweden	...	4
Switzerland	...	54
Turkey	...	1
U.S.A.	...	3
Total	...	279

XIII INTERNATIONAL BEEKEEPING CONGRESS, AMSTERDAM.

AUGUST 22-27, 1949.

By EVA CRANE.

It is extremely difficult to write an objective account of an international congress, because such an occasion holds a different meaning for almost every participant. The XIII International Beekeeping Congress was no exception in this respect. To some, it meant renewing friendships after the dark years of war which separated this Congress from the last (held at Zürich in 1939, only a month before the second world war). To some, it meant meeting for the first time correspondents of years' standing; and to many it meant personal contact with research workers whose names were familiar from their publications, and who now at last assumed reality. To many more it provided a rare opportunity to discuss subjects of mutual interest, and these discussions and interchange of ideas—carried out not only in the lecture hall itself, but also in hotels and restaurants, in boats and cars, and in the open air under a hot August sun—are probably of considerably more importance than the actual reading of papers.

OPENING OF THE CONGRESS.

The proceedings opened on Monday evening, August 22nd, with an informal meeting at the Paviljoen Vondelpark, when the President of the Congress, Mr. L. R. J. ridder van Rappard, delivered a lively speech of welcome in French. In order to prepare us gently for the flights of linguistic ability which became apparent as the Congress proceeded, full translations of this speech were circulated in English, French and German as well as in Dutch. I think that many of the English-speaking visitors, with their traditional lack of facility in other languages, were deeply touched by the courtesy of the Dutch in excluding their own language from the official languages of the Congress, which were English, French and German.

PROCEEDINGS.

On the following days meetings were held at the Minerva Paviljeon, near the southern outskirts of Amsterdam, during which papers were read during five 3½ hour sessions. The standard procedure was as follows: the speaker read his paper in whichever of the three languages he chose, and this was translated freely into the other two languages by the interpreter, from notes taken during the reading of the paper. I fear that listeners were sometimes side-tracked from attending closely to the subject of the papers by watching the miracle of Mlle. Nora Baldensperger's transcriptions—and the occasional charming lapses of translation into the wrong language. Dr. J. de Wilde ably supported Mlle. Baldensperger on many occasions.

Each speaker was subjected to the alarming interruption of a flash-light photograph, all the more unnerving because, although he knew it must come, he could not know just when (except that he would surely have his mouth open at the time). Each photograph was exhibited in the foyer on the following day, to the chagrin of its subject and the entertainment of his friends.

Summaries of all papers were pre-circulated in four languages and the proceedings will be published in full from the Netherlands. In Great Britain members of the Apis Club, the Bee Research Association and the Scottish Beekeepers' Association can borrow copies of these summaries from their respective libraries; in other countries no doubt similar arrangements will be made. Very briefly, the subjects were as follows:

Bee Breeding.

Dr. M. Rousseau (France) set out some of the practical considerations on which any scheme of bee breeding must be based, and emphasised the importance of complete and accurate description of characteristics. Professor A. Ghigi (Italy) spoke of biometric research on the physical characteristics of the Italian bee (*Apis ligustica*).

Dr. C. G. Butler (Great Britain) described the progress which has been made in instrumental insemination, and assessed its significance. This was followed up by Mr. J. I. Hambleton (U.S.A.) who gave an account of the plans and of the work in progress for the improvement of the strains of bees in the U.S.A. These plans involve the use of instrumental insemination for fixing pure strains, but depend on controlled mating in isolated stations for maintaining good hybrid strains of bee which possess good working qualities, docility and resistance to disease.

Bee Behaviour.

Mr. C. R. Ribbands (Great Britain) described observations which suggest that foraging bees exercise *continuous* choice of suitable blossoms, so that deterioration in the nectar producing value of a crop, or even of a group of flowers, makes the bees working it restless, and liable to change their foraging area or move to another crop. He also described the effects on the foraging habits of bees of various anaesthetics (carbon dioxide, nitrogen and chloroform).

Dr. O. Hammer (Denmark) described how bees were found to gather pollen and nectar freely from red clover in July, especially during heat waves; this accounts for hitherto unexplained peaks in hive-weight graphs.

Dr. A. Minderhoud (Netherlands) directed attention to work on the foraging habits of both queen and worker bumble bees, and suggested that a study of the habits of insects allied to honeybees might throw light on their behaviour.

Mr. C. B. Dennis (Great Britain) gave observations on the behaviour of bees in colonies fed with sugar syrup, and drew attention to some of the practical lessons arising from these observations.

Bee Diseases.

Dr. P. Pillon (French Veterinary Service) gave an account of official measures taken to prevent the spread of bee diseases in his country and Mr. P. S. Milne (Ministry of Agriculture) described the operation and results of the Bee Diseases Order in England and Wales, and showed how the incidence of A.F.B. has dropped to one third in those counties where vigorous control measures have been applied. An interesting practical discussion developed round the paper of Professor A. Brizard (France) on E.F.B., in which he suggested that this may be a group of diseases, and that international co-operation in comparing the differing clinical features of the disease might elucidate some of the problems it raises.

Dr. R. Lunder (Norway) dealt with Nosema control in his own country, describing work in a district half the size of Holland, on both the incidence of the disease and its control by destruction of infected colonies and their replacement by healthy ones. Control is also exercised over incoming queens whose cages and attendants are destroyed. Dr. H. Gontarski (Germany) described laboratory experiments on the treatment of Nosema-infected bees with chemotherapeutic preparations.

Professor J. Guilhon (France) took for his subject a somewhat rare infection *apimyiiasis*, caused by a parasitic dipterous larva which sometimes attacks the thorax and abdomen of the adult bee.

Pollen Analysis; Insecticides.

Dr. Anna Maurizio (Switzerland) gave a summary of work done in Switzerland on pollen analysis and of its practical value, and described a new field of activity, namely its use in the diagnosis of bee poisoning. Dr. J. Evenius (Germany) discussed the recent "improved" insecticides designed to control insect pests, and how their inherent danger to the honeybee can be minimised.

History of Beekeeping.

Dr. H. M. Fraser (Great Britain) spoke of the development of beekeeping in England and the Low Countries in the 16th and 17th centuries, describing both early books and beekeeping methods, and showing how the foundations were laid for later scientific advances in knowledge.

Organizations.

Mr. A. Lehmann (Switzerland) described the work of the Swiss Honey Marketing Association in controlling the sale of Swiss honey, by price stabilisation, by storing a part of the crop in good years for use in poor ones, and by maintaining a high standard by inspection and control of quality.

Dr. R. Chauvin (France) set out the plans in progress and in prospect for work at the new State Institute for Beekeeping Research which is being partly financed by the Federation of French Beekeeping Associations.

Mr. E. G. Burt and Dr. Eva Crane (Great Britain) described the aims and work of the Research Committee of the British Bee Keepers' Association and of the newly formed Bee Research Association, particularly in helping amateurs carrying out research work and in making the results of research more widely available.

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION

The last session of the Congress was devoted to a discussion of a permanent international federation of beekeepers' organizations. Careful plans had been drawn up for this by the Congress Committee and a representative working-party was elected with Dr. O. Morgenthaler (Switzerland) as its Secretary. Other members are Cl. Bouchardeau (France), Jak. Mentzer (Germany), L. Illingworth (Apis Club and Great Britain), J. G. de Roever (Netherlands), Montemayor J. Cabezas (Spain) and J. I. Hambleton (U.S.A.). The task of this working-party is to explore further the possibilities of an International Beekeeping Federation, and to secure the support of the various national bodies concerned. It will report to the XIV International Congress, which may be held in Great Britain in 1951, the year of the Festival of Britain. Meanwhile the international journal *Bee World* is to be the official organ of the working-party.

It is always good to use past experience for the benefit of future occasions, and the following suggestions might perhaps be considered :

- (1) Papers read could usefully be grouped under subjects, so that one complete session would be devoted to bee-breeding, another to diseases and so on.
- (2) More time could be devoted to the discussion of each paper if the oral translations of the paper itself were omitted. With pre-circulated translations of the summary, this should be quite feasible.
- (3) Alternative excursions might be arranged for those who particularly want to study national beekeeping practice and scientific institutions and are willing to forego excursions of more general interest in order to do so.
- (4) Many visitors from other countries would be especially interested in an exhibition of modern beekeeping equipment and beekeeping books of the country of the Congress.
- (5) It is unlikely that the wealth of hospitality extended to the Congress this year could be repeated in many other countries under present conditions. No country should reject the opportunity of receiving the next or a subsequent International Congress on the grounds that it cannot give such magnificent hospitality as we enjoyed in the Netherlands.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

The official Congress dinner took place on Friday, and for most of us it was a unique experience. It started at 6.30 p.m., when we were invited by the French delegation to partake of preprandial drinks and the dinner which followed lasted until after midnight. It was a revelation to the British delegates after ten years of restriction to "three courses only"; it would be cruel, however, to those who did not attend the Congress to give details of the food. Speeches alternated with courses, and the Minister of Agriculture of the Netherlands and delegates from all the countries represented spoke, this time in any language they chose. Dr. R. H. Barnes (Great Britain) endeared himself to us all by a gallant attempt to give a speech in Dutch; the speech however caused a certain amount of uneasiness to the Secretary of the Congress, who had been conversing throughout the dinner in fluent Dutch, English, French, German and Spanish, but who now needed considerable reassurance that *his* English did not sound like Dr. Barnes' Dutch.

On Tuesday evening the burgomaster and town council of Amsterdam gave a reception for the Congress in the Municipal Museum. This houses a remarkable collection of modern Dutch pictures, especially of the Amsterdam school, which side-tracked some of us for a short time from discussing bees. On Thursday evening a fascinating series of Dutch colour films on bees was shown.

On most days excursions were available for wives of delegates and others who preferred the open air to the lecture hall of the Minerva Paviljoen. These excursions took them to Aalsmeer, the Dutch flower market; to Alkmaar and the island of Marken; and to see more of old Amsterdam than the main excursions allowed.

MAIN EXCURSIONS

On Wednesday and Thursday afternoons, and on Saturday, there were organized excursions for the whole Congress. On Wednesday, after lunch in the centre of Amsterdam at the Hotel Krasnapolsky, we were taken in four motor boats for a *Rondvaart*, a round-trip along some of the delightful canals of old Amsterdam and the wide river with the intriguing name of IJ or Y, where we saw harbours used by shipping from all countries of the world.

On Thursday the afternoon excursion was by motor-coach to see the famous dam enclosing the IJsselmeer (Zuyder Zee). We drove about forty miles north from Amsterdam through North Holland (North and South Holland are two of the eleven provinces of the Netherlands). The first place of interest was Volendam, on the western shore of the IJsselmeer, where we saw many examples of the traditional local dress which is still commonly worn there. Between Hoorn and Wieringen we drove across the Wieringen polder, the first large tract of land (nearly 100 square miles) to be reclaimed from the IJsselmeer and brought under cultivation. The dam itself is 20 miles long and some 50 yards wide. It contains a single wide road, along which we drove as far as the monument which marks the last gap to be filled. Here for the first time we were allowed to disembark; the organisers had quickly discovered that

it was nearly as difficult to collect us all together in our appointed places in the coaches as it is to collect a colony of bees in its hive at mid-day. On the return journey we passed Alkmaar, a moated country town famous for its cheese market.

On Saturday, the last day of the Congress, we set out at 8 a.m. for a full day's excursion to meet the Dutch beekeepers at their annual gathering in the Open-air Museum near Arnhem. Between one and two thousand members of the Dutch Beekeepers' Association were assembled in the open-air theatre of the Museum and here, after inaugural speeches by Mr. J. E. W. Put on behalf of the Association and Mr. L. R. J. ridder van Rappard on behalf of the Congress, we watched a short ballet representing the life throughout the summer of a queen honeybee and her attendant workers—and of their beekeeper. What made this delightful interlude universally appreciated was that it completely overcame the language barrier between us and the Dutch beekeepers: we *all* understood its symbolism.

After lunch we wandered round the museum—which occupies several hundred acres of undulating wooded country—and saw old Dutch windmills, farms and houses, and, of special interest to members of the Congress, an exhibition of beekeeping equipment from days gone by.

Then the more energetic members were taken by coach to see bees at the heather a few miles away. Here we were lent bee-veils complete with hoods, not unlike those in Pieter Breughel's paintings. We saw hives, skeps and *boogkorven* (made of straw or reeds, with moveable tall frames), and a pipe-smoker in operation. There was no time to ask all the questions we had in our minds about Dutch beekeeping practice, for we were soon taken back to the Museum for the short closing ceremony of the Congress.

Here the Congress ended, and the Dutch beekeepers returned by *inkerbuss* to their homes and the members of the Congress to Amsterdam. So we separated—to go on a further bee-journey through the Netherlands, to visit Paris, to spend a few days seeing Dutch picture galleries, to sail in Friesland, or to start another week's work. Few attained what we all felt we needed—a long, long rest.

When we parted we knew that the hope expressed by the President of the Congress at the end of his opening speech had been and would be fulfilled: "I hope that the coming days will exceed your and our expectations; I hope that when you leave this country you will go home, not only with more knowledge of the scientific side of apiculture, but that you will remember a number of like-minded people who, however far away from you they may live, will have become your friends because of the contacts you have made here in Amsterdam."