

# Ed Robertson produces 90,000 lbs. of honey a year at Hornby apiary

by Jennifer Barr

To bee or not to bee—that is the question. To Ed Robertson of Hornby Apiaries, it is no question at all. He's been 'Beeing' all his life. So did his father and his grandfather. And Ed's sons, Jack and Ronnie, are coming into the bee business, too. Ed has 900 colonies of bees which produce an average of a hundred pounds of honey a year. That's a heap of honey—enough to keep a pooh bear happy for life. All those bees don't live on the one acre Robertson property, complete with honey house. They're parcelled out to farms for a 20 mile radius. Ed has colonies thriving as far away as Dundas, Streetsville, Erin township, and Kilbride.

Farmers like to have bees for pollinating clover fields and orchards, usually supplying roaming room for up to 30 hives. Mr. Robertson and his staff are on the road all summer servicing the colonies.

There's a heavy demand for clover honey which is mild flavoured as opposed to the stronger flavoured buckwheat honey.

Mr. Robertson keeps track of every hive and knows how many bees are in it, how production is, what breed the bees are and who the queen is. He's had one queen for 10 years and some for five or six but most queens are replaced after two years.

The queen is responsible for the entire hive production. It is she who lays all the eggs that produce the worker bees. When a queen is hatched she mates in two weeks with one of five drones. This mating provides here with fertile eggs for a lifetime, even if that lifetime spans ten years.

A queen lays up to a hundred thousand eggs a year replacing the worker bees who live only about three weeks in fine productive weather when they work day and night.

All summer long workers collect nectar from flowers—and pollinating incidentally as they go—to produce the honey stored in the honeycombs of the hive. At night these sterile female workers clean the hive, store honey, feed the queen and the male drones, and care for the young bees in the nursery. No wonder they only last three weeks.

The drones are males with one function only—to fertilize

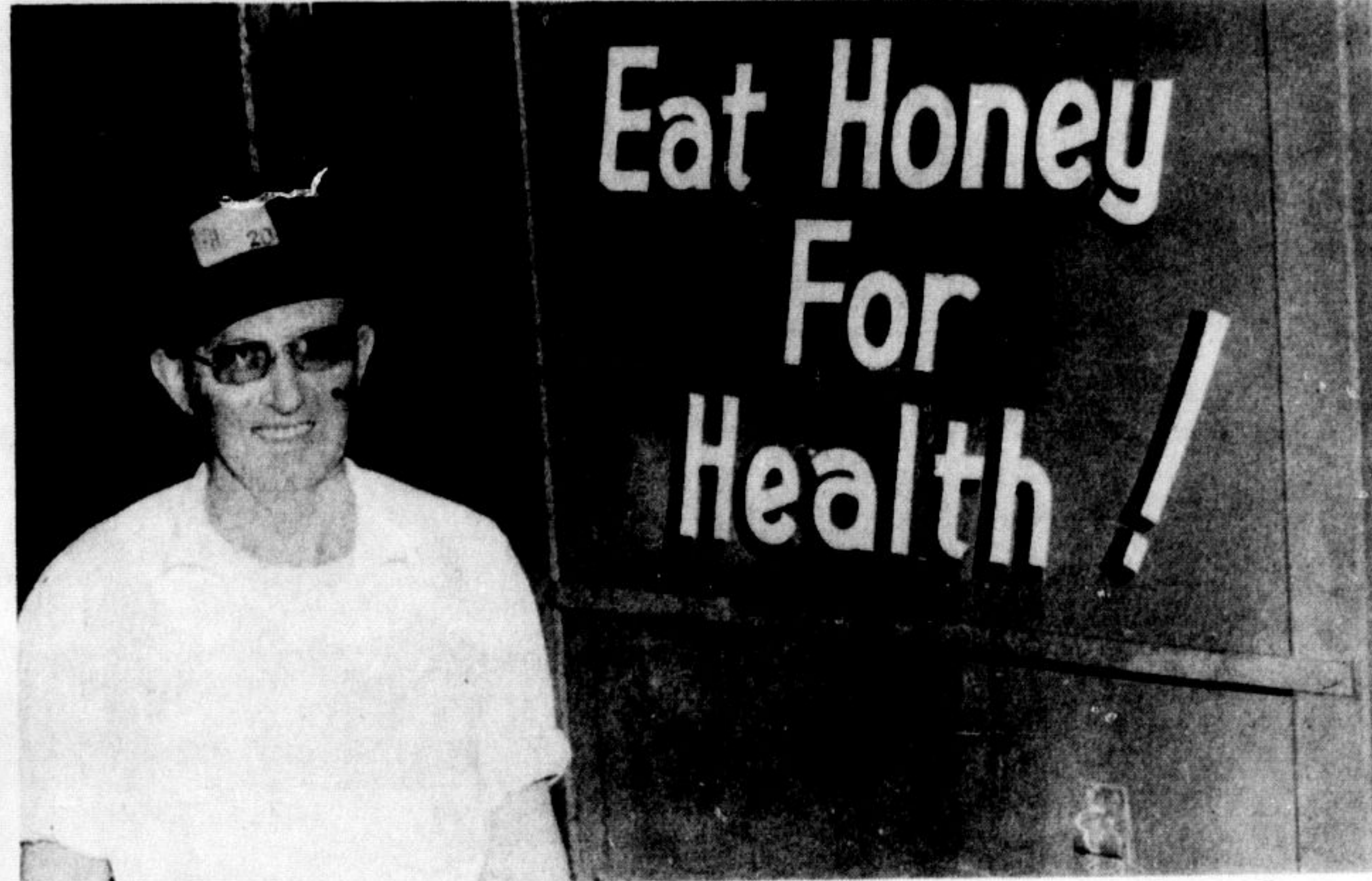
any new queens. In the fall when the bees are preparing for winter, the useless drones will be killed or driven out rather than be fed the precious stores all winter.

When the colony becomes very strong, the workers will feed their special Royal Jelly to selected bee eggs to make queens. When a new queen hatches, she will kill the other queen larvae and take over the hive.

The old queen swarms away with several thousand workers to start a new colony. If the original colony is exceptionally strong, two or more new queens may hatch

and swarm also. The apiarist controls natural swarming by clipping the queen's wings and dividing the colony himself thereby establishing new hives.

In the early fall, the honey harvest takes place and excess honey combs are removed from the hive. The honey cells are sealed by the bees with beeswax so the procedure isn't a messy one. The hive is left with approximately 50 pounds of honey and supplemental glucose solution made from white sugar.



ED ROBERTSON believes in his product, or so the sign on his apiary trucks say Mr. Robertson owns and operates Hornby Apiaries and cares for 900 colonies of bees.

The bees prepare themselves for the winter and the apiarist insulates the hives. Now comes the 'fun' part—extracting the honey.

The combs are warmed to 90 degrees to facilitate the flow of honey. They are then de-capped by machine, the wax cap of every tiny cell being cut off. Honey is then extracted from the combs by centrifugal force and fed through pipes into huge settling vats. There it's packed into 40 gallon drums, on Ed Robertson's farm, and sent all over the world, from Japan to England to the Netherlands, under the name of fine Canadian clover honey.

Mr. Robertson also sells creamed honey locally from the farm to anyone who wishes it. Even the hives are for sale. An enthusiast can set himself up with home grown

honey for about \$150 for a stocked hive. A hive should yield a hundred pounds profit per year.

Ed looks surprised when asked if the bees sting him. "Sure, they sting", he agrees, but only if handled incorrectly.

"You gotta understand bees to work with them. If you work them in the right weather, you'll get few stings. But you can tell a storm is coming by the bees—low pressure makes cross bees, then they'll sting."

"You gotta respect a bee," he adds, "You don't push them—you work with the bees."

When he does get stung, Mr. Robertson scrapes the stinger out rather than pulling out. This removes the poison. Then he puts a little saliva and mud on it—or beef

tenderizer—whichever happens to have around! A tame bee loses its sting when it strikes and thus dies.

Ed recommends comb honey eaten all year round to combat hay fever. This is a recognized medical fact. Apparently the pollen in the honey helps desensitize the sufferer.

Mr. Robertson is gearing up for a busy season with helpers, sons Jack and Ronnie, son-in-law, Ron Neath, and another 'lad' he's yet to hire. Proceeds from the honey farm exceed those of a few years ago and are very much more than the profits of honey producing in the depression days when Ed started helping his grandfather as a young boy.

Even so, it takes long hours to make sure the crop is a good one. Ed Robertson and his crew work almost as hard as the busy bees themselves.

## Omagh

### Power out three hours

By Mrs. Cecil Patterson  
Omagh and Drumquin districts were in darkness for three hours or more Saturday evening when hydro suddenly went off about 9:30 p.m. The blackout was attributed to a fire in a large transformer pole at Omagh corner. A severe electric and wind storm had passed through the area shortly before.

Hydro crews and firemen answered the call quickly and power was restored by 12:30 a.m. Thank you, boys, for your good work.

Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mathies, formerly of Milton and now of Naples, Fla., have been visiting relatives and friends in this area with their children Douglas, Patti Ann and baby Jennifer Rick and Joy Rowan were hosts at a lawn party and buffet in their honor. The Aug. 9 party was attended by former members of Peel Scuba Club, Paul and Sandra and family returned home Aug. 13.

David Rowan and Phillip Hadfield returned Saturday from Trenton Air Force Base. David took a three week Junior Leader Course at the base and Phillip had the two-week basic training course. About 12 boys and girls from Milton and area attended.

An enjoyable evening was spent at Boyne Centre Thursday evening when members of Omagh Presbyterian Church, neighbors and friends gathered to honor a young couple with a miscellaneous shower of gifts for their new home.

The bride-to-be, Eileen Marshall, and her husband-to-be, Dick Vanderdean, were assisted in opening their many beautifully decorated gifts by Karen Powell, Laura

Marshall, Ruth Gillies and April Wilson. Dick and Eileen will be married Sept. 9.

A handsome clock, a gift from the Omagh Presbyterian Women's Association, was presented by Mrs. Morris Turner to Dick. In Omagh Church the girls are given a shower and the boys a gift. Dick and Eileen are members of the church and sing in the choir.

William Milligan was master of ceremonies for the evening. Conveners were Barb Ford, Jessie McCann, Evelyn Gillies and Ada McCann.

A large congregation worshipped at Omagh Presbyterian Church Sunday. Rev. W. Milligan was in the pulpit. Stanley Wilson read the Scripture lesson and Dick Vanderdean gave the prayer. Laura Marshall was soloist. Worship will resume Sunday, Sept. 3, following a two-week holiday.

The regular meeting of the Ontario Steam and Antique Preservers Association was held at Boyne Centre Thursday evening with 115 members and visitors attending. Dennis Webb, president, was in the chair. Business concerned the upcoming Steam-Era to be held in Milton on Labor Day weekend.

Program was supplied by a local band, The Hornby General Store.

Belated birthday greetings to Andrea Goode and Scott Sifton of Fourth Line who celebrated their first birthdays Aug. 3.

Birthday good wishes to Robert Marshall, Fifth Line, on his birthday Aug. 19.

Birthday greetings to David Rowan, who was 15 years old Sunday, and to his cousin, Murray Royce of Hornby, who was 14 years old Aug. 12.

Birthday wishes to Erma McDowell on Aug. 23 and to Eleanor Patton on her special day Aug. 30.

—The local Lions Club is planning to run its hamburger concession at the Steam-Era again this year. It is always a popular refreshment spot in the fair grounds.

### HALTON SEPARATE SCHOOL BOARD ADVANCE REGISTRATION ASSUMPTION HIGH SCHOOL

802 Drury Lane, Burlington  
Students residing in Milton, Oakville, and Burlington who plan to attend but have not registered for Assumption High School may register the week of  
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Bus routes are posted at main entrance of all schools.  
**R. J. O'Brien** Chairman  
**C. G. Byrnes** Director of Education

VEILED FOR EFFECT not protection, Ed Robertson of Hornby examines one of a shipment of new queen bees from Alabama. Mr. Robertson needs new queens to re-stock the nearly thousand hives on his apiary.

### Announce support price for '77-78 corn

By Henry J. Stanley  
Agriculture Representative  
The Farm Income Stabilization Commission of Ontario has announced a support price of \$2.38 per bushel for corn sold in the crop year Sept. 1, 1977 to Aug. 31, 1978.

The Ontario support price is based on 95 per cent of the average market prices for the previous five years, plus an adjustment for cash production costs. Establishment of the Ontario price follows a recent announcement by the federal government of a \$2.26 per bushel support level under the federal plan.

The average market price for the 1977 crop year will not be determined until the middle of September. If that price is less than \$2.26 however, producers enrolled in the Ontario plan can expect a net payment of at least eight cents per bushel.

The Ontario plan is funded one-third by producers and two-thirds by the Ontario government. The producer's share will be deducted from the payment. More than 11,500 corn producers enrolled in the 1977 Ontario corn plan.

Claims forms for the 1977 crop year will be mailed to participating producers. Forms must be filled out and returned with receipts attached for payment to be made.

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### Thanks farmers donating grain

By Martha Corker  
On Sunday, Aug. 13 the Bicentennial Wagon Train stayed in Milton. The Halton 4-H Horse Club arranged to have hay for the horses, and the local United Co-operatives branch donated the grain.

The Horse Club would like to thank the Co-op and the farmers who donated the hay. They are Gordon Wingfield, Jim Fischer, Lee Wilkinson, Bruce McClure, Walter Scott, Jim Stark, Claude Pickett, Harold Brown, Bob Ruddell, Jack Marchmont, Debbie Leonard, George Bird, Bill Beary, Al Chamberlain, Tom McDonald, Jim Brown, Noni Wilcox, Rod Pinkney, Ron

Lister, Roy Ineson, Cecil Patterson, Ward Brownridge, Ford Wickson and Earl McDowell.

Mr. Holton and Lorne Walker offered their farm for water stops, and F. Colling allowed a lunch stop on his farm. The Milton Fair Board consented to the stay at the fair grounds.

Martha Corker, Lorne Laing, Brian Cargill, Earl Gifford, Dick Cain, Mr. Harrison and Beth Harrison transported the hay and grain from the farms to the fairgrounds.

All those involved agreed that the visit in Milton was a success.

### Judge sheep

By Ruth Gillies  
On Aug. 9 the last Sheep Club meeting took place at Russell Hurren's farm. Holly Hurren, vice-president, called the meeting to order and Heidi Stadler led the 4-H pledge. Ellen Hurren read the minutes of the last meeting.

Holly told about the 4-H Family Day planned for Sept. 3 at the Hornby Ball Park. Six lambs were brought out for showmanship. Doug Gardhouse explained what judges are looking for in showmanship and what exactly we should do.

There were two classes. The more experienced members were in the first class — this gave the less experienced members a chance to see how, what, and what not to do.

Later Doug Gardhouse showed how to prepare and trim a lamb for show day. Since it was the last meeting we had our quiz.

Hot dogs and lemonade were served and we thanked Mr. and Mrs. Hurren for letting the Sheep Club visit their farm.

### Ex-poultry

### Alf wins again

Alf Waldie has been showing poultry at the Canadian National Exhibition since 1922 — and he still goes about the task in a winning way.

This year Alf came back with five firsts, a third, a fourth and one bird out of the running.

He had a first hen, a first trio in the modern game blackbird, first trio in the modern duckwing, first hen in the AOV, third hen in the Black Spanish class, first trio in the Silver Grey Dorking and fourth in the Modern Game Bantam.

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