

queenless hives, and to ensure that the bees are in a suitable condition to carry on brood-rearing until the appearance of the early spring flowers. In making the examination it is necessary to carry out the work expeditiously, choosing the warmest hours of the mildest days.

In cases where the supers have been left on the hives these should be removed, as advised previously. Have the smoker in readiness. After removing the mat, take out one of the end frames. This will facilitate the examination of the centre combs. Under normal conditions the centre combs will contain varying-sized patches of brood according to the strength of the colonies. This will at once denote whether the colony has a laying queen or not. However, it is not wise to conclude at once that the colony is queenless if brood is not visible, so much depending on the locality and the weather preceding the examination. If the colony is strong and contented it is as well to shelve the question of its queenlessness until a later date, when a further examination may be carried out.

If each hive is to be left for the next few weeks undisturbed it should contain at least 18 lb. to 20 lb. of honey; failing this amount, preparation should be made for feeding. For this the best feeder to use at this season of the year is the division-board feeder, which may be obtained at any of the hive-dealers, and advantage may be taken of this examination to put them in the hives. Feed only within the hives, for any other method will surely produce trouble. Place the feeders on the warm side of the hive and as close as possible to the cluster. It must be remembered that artificial feeding is invariably stimulating—*i.e.*, it induces an increase in brood-rearing, and once begun it must be continued until the natural flow from the field sets in. In feeding use only the best white sugar. On no account use honey, as it is impossible to be certain of its source. Many beekeepers, tempted by the cheap price of inferior honey, have in the past fed their bees with this in the spring, only to awaken later on in the season to the fact that they have infected all their colonies with foul-brood. A syrup compounded of 2 parts water to 1 of sugar, fed slightly warm, is the best artificial food for bees in the spring. Full particulars in regard to feeding are given in the Department's New Series Bulletin No. 39, which may be obtained free on application.

PREPARATIONS FOR THE SEASON.

By the end of August the beekeeper should have his preparations for the season's work well in hand. Hive and frame making, also the overhaul of all defective supers, roofs, and