

Increase of Colonies and Production of Honey

Seasonal Notes for the Domestic Beekeeper

AT this time of the year the beekeeper should have made up his mind whether he intends to manage his apiary solely for the production of honey or for a limited increase of colonies. In this article A. W. Bennett, Apiary Instructor, Department of Agriculture, Hamilton, describes the work to be done in both methods.

IF the bees were headed by a young, vigorous queen and a good supply of stores was left last autumn, by this time of the year brood rearing will have begun and hives should now contain some brood in all stages and begin to show an increase in the number of bees in the hive. Before this increase becomes too large a thorough inspection of the brood should be made. Any hive showing disease should be promptly destroyed by fire and the local Apiary Instructor informed of the action taken.

During this inspection a check can be made on the stores in the hive, and if they are low, feeding will have to begin and continue until the bees can gather enough food to maintain themselves.

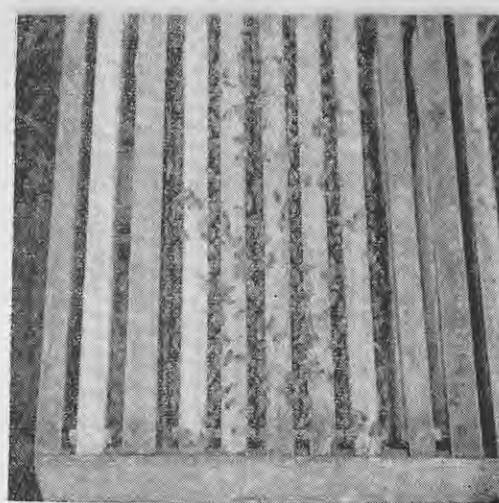
After the inspection of the brood the hive can be given a spring clean-

ing. Floor boards should be scraped and any burr comb removed from the frames and boxes with the hive tool. If the inside of the hive is wet through the use of bad-fitting or worn-out equipment, sound, dry parts should be provided.

This spring cleaning of the hive is of immense help to the bees and the building up of the colony will greatly benefit by it. This work should be carried out as quickly as possible to avoid exposing the bees and brood too long to the cool air. An opened hive is also likely to attract robbers, and robbing at this time of the year can become quite serious.

Making an Increase

For the domestic beekeeper still gaining experience with his bees it is perhaps best to increase slowly and be



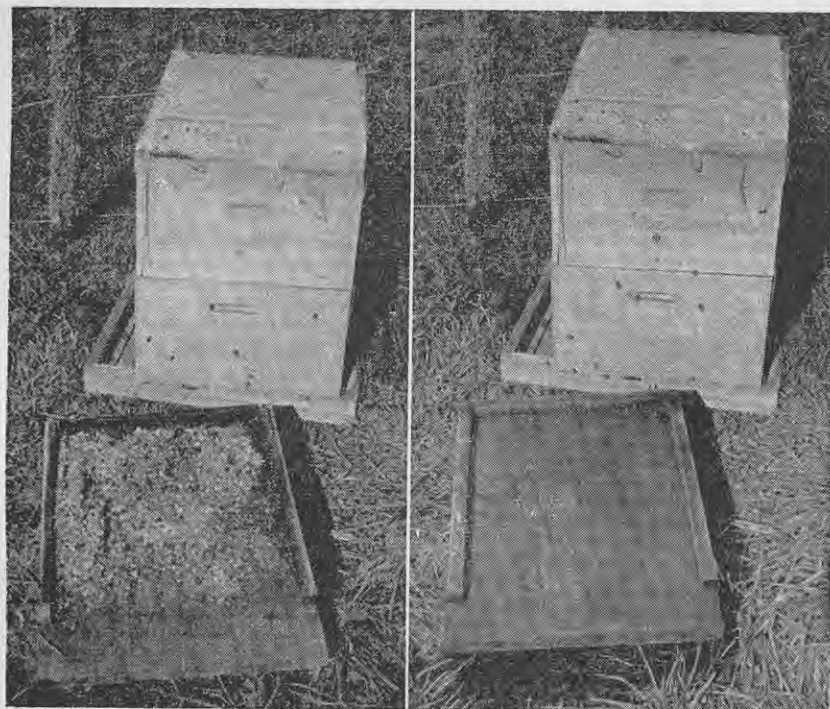
A hive in early spring, showing normal cluster of bees. There is shortage of stores in the outside combs, which should be replaced with full combs of honey or the hive fed with sugar syrup.

content with the doubling of the number of colonies kept; otherwise he may run into trouble through lack of experience and find he has lost money on his bees.

For each increase he intends to make he will require a floor board, 2 brood chambers complete with combs or frames of foundation, 1 mat, and a lid solely to house the brood of a new hive, plus any supers that may be required this season for the surplus honey. This equipment should be got ready now to receive the increase, as later in the season stocks may be low at the dealers and some items not procurable.

In 3 or 4 weeks the hives should be inspected again, and if a regular supply of food has been obtained by the bees during the last month, they will be quite strong and may be making preparations to swarm by building queen cells. At this stage the colony will be just right to make an increase.

The beekeeper must now go through the colony and find the queen. The



LEFT—Spring cleaning. Brood boxes are removed and placed on the upturned roof. The mat is left over the bees until the floor has been cleaned. RIGHT—The floor cleaned and ready to receive the boxes again. The hive should be kept in its original position.



Sound, well-painted equipment ready for use. Any parts that require changing during the spring clean should be replaced.

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