

- (2) The Committee recommended weed control officers for each Island. We consider that there should be a specialist weed control officer in each of the districts of the Department which is under the control of a fields superintendent—that is to say, officers at Auckland, Palmerston North, Christchurch, and Dunedin. Officers should be chosen for their suitability to co-operate with the County Councils to see that adequate work is done on weed-control and to compile the notes on which the Director-General of Agriculture can base his annual report.
- (3) Attention should be drawn to the fact that many weeds are spread by the County Council placing gravel on the roads, the gravel having been taken from pits where weeds are abundant. We know of many cases where the spread of weeds in a district has resulted from this cause, and the attention of County Councils and the Railways Department should be drawn to this matter. In such cases in the future these authorities themselves should take immediate steps to have the weeds removed before they have become a nuisance.

We are very gravely concerned at what we have seen on the tour (it might be considered a shameful effect of one hundred years' occupation) that so many weeds should appear on the landscape. Unfortunately, little can be done quickly as far as eradication is concerned, but the work must be steadily pursued from established perimeters of clear ground gradually working towards the final objective of total elimination. This will involve close supervision and keen administration. We realize that it is difficult to provide for sustained enthusiasm over a long period of years, but sustained enthusiasm is essential. We feel that the best way of ensuring attention is to make it necessary for the Director-General of Agriculture to comment in detail on the position in each county in his annual report to Parliament each year and to trust that the representatives of the people in Parliament will continue to be sufficiently appreciative of the evil effects of weeds that they will ensure that constant effective pursuit is made of weed reduction.

While we were in the Nelson district evidence was brought to us by many farmers that they have made a practice of gorse-farming, and they believed that in their area gorse was a most suitable pasture plant. There is no doubt that they were feeding their sheep on gorse, that if the lambs were kept on gorse from birth they ate it and survived. We would not like to say that we thought from what we saw that the sheep were thriving on these conditions, and we cannot endorse a system of gorse-farming, even in the Nelson district. It is a system of impoverished farming which yields doubtful economic returns to the farmer, while the constant burning which is necessary to maintain the gorse in palatable condition will ruin the fertility of the soils. It is a means of securing a meagre subsistence at the expense of the land. It must be admitted that great areas of the land are very poor in any case, so poor that they may not support better pastures. There is scope for investigation into how far improved methods can be employed, and we recommend that special attention be given to this problem during