

making a total of £264,140 involved in grant payments. With additional areas coming under Board control, and existing Boards striking higher rates to meet increased working-expenses, the total subsidy paid to Boards on rates collected for the period under review amounted to £175,672. This makes a grant total of £439,812 made available to Boards for control measures generally.

With another mild winter followed by a dry spring and summer there was an uninterrupted breeding season. This has fully taxed all the resources of established Boards and in some instances, because of shortage of labour, a slight deterioration in the control of the pest was evident. In areas outside of rabbit districts and in recently constituted rabbit districts heavy infestation was common. Many of these new Boards had the greatest difficulty in making progress and the shortage of efficient labour seriously handicapped activities.

Because of fire risk the shipping of phosphorus from England was prohibited and this led to a complete cessation of the manufacture of phosphorized pollard for some time. This prejudiced the operations of Boards and in many cases their extermination programmes were disrupted. When fresh packing arrangements were made by the suppliers the shipment of phosphorus was resumed and supplies came to hand early in 1950. Strychnine supplies have been adequate.

The sowing of phosphorized pollard pellets from the air was undertaken by a number of Boards with uniformly good results. The cost compares favourably with normal, orthodox hand methods. The use of the aeroplane in coping with the pest might prove the solution to dealing with large tracts of back country and overcome the difficulty in getting labour to work this type of country.

The Rabbit Destruction Council has continued to give splendid service and has carried out its functions in a most commendable manner.

#### NOXIOUS WEEDS

A little progress has been made in noxious weeds control, but, in the main, land occupiers have confined their activities to dealing with better-class land. Chlorate weed-killers have been in reasonable supply and the use of hormone-type weed-killers is rapidly becoming recognized as a decided advance in the control of weeds. It has been demonstrated that hormones will assist in the control of blackberry. The use of mechanical units in weed-control work is also being more widely accepted in the general weed-control programme. The shortage of labour continues to retard progress in weed-eradication work. Many local authorities who were given grants to enable weeds, particularly ragwort, to be attended to on Crown and Maori lands were unable to expend their grants fully because of inability to obtain an adequate labour force. Another local authority has assumed administration of the Act, this making a total of 40 county councils responsible for weed-control work in their districts.

It was not found possible to introduce during the 1949 session of Parliament a Bill amending the Noxious Weeds Act, 1928, to incorporate the principal recommendations made by the Special Noxious Weeds Committee.

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