

providing employment, and (2) of making an effort on a much bigger scale than had previously been attempted to deal with the large areas of ragwort-infested country that was menacing the continued occupation of such lands on a payable productive basis.

During this year thirty-nine County Councils and two River Boards operated under the scheme at a cost of approximately £65,000, most of this expenditure being on ragwort, and the reports received on the work indicate a very considerably improved condition of the areas generally. In addition to this, many individual farmers took advantage of the opportunity afforded by Scheme 13B of the Labour Department by getting subsidized labour for noxious-weed control. As a sequence to the improved condition of lands following on the extended work of the past three years, consideration should now be given to maintaining control, without the recurring expenditure on labour and material, by stocking up under proper methods of control with sheep, and it is hoped that this means of dealing with the weed will now be adopted by farmers who have benefitted by the assistance given under the scheme. Large grants of money for the purpose of dealing with ragwort or other noxious-weed infested lands cannot be expected to be continued indefinitely, and every effort should be taken to see that any improvement gained is maintained, and the land not allowed to slip back to its former position.

The subsidy of 1d. per pound on sales of sodium chlorate and Atlacide was continued, and in all £10,326 6s. 6d. was paid out by way of subsidy.

Other classes of noxious weeds have been dealt with as circumstances permitted, but many lands still carry far too heavy an infestation of noxious weeds, which under good farm-management should not pertain. It would be of advantage in many cases if the areas held were smaller.

#### STAFF.

I desire to express a word of appreciation to the members of the staff for their share in the past year's work. All have loyally and willingly carried out their respective duties, and have thus contributed to the value of the work carried out for the benefit of the stockowner and the Dominion as a whole.

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