

RAGWORT-ERADICATION.

Under the supervision of the Agriculture Department subsidies of £2 5s. and £1 10s. per man-week for married and single men respectively were made available to individual farmers for the eradication of ragwort.

Owing to the very small number of men employed under this scheme during the past few years it was felt that its continuance as a special employment scheme was no longer justified, and the scheme was terminated on the 21st December, 1940, when arrangements were made for this class of work to be included under the 4B Scheme.

SCHEME No. 16 : SUBSIDIZED APPRENTICES IN BUILDING TRADE.

The object of this scheme was to increase the supply of skilled labour required in the building trade, and to assist that class of young men who, during the depression years, had been denied the opportunity of learning a skilled trade.

The placement of young men under this scheme, which provided for subsidies ranging from a maximum of £1 5s. per week and reducing annually over a three-year period in respect of short-term apprenticeships in the carpentry and bricklaying trades, was terminated on the 30th April, 1940, as it was deemed that the scheme had fulfilled its useful purpose.

Commencing in September, 1937, the scheme covered the placement of some 629 apprentices and 129 trainees, the position regarding these contracts on the 5th April, 1941, being as follows :—

	Carpenters.		Bricklayers : Apprentices.	Total.
	Apprentices.	Trainees.		
(a) Contracts in operation	185	11	3	199
(b) Contracts terminated	159	79	4	242
(c) Contracts suspended	150	11	6	167
(d) Contracts expired	103	22	10	135
(e) Contracts cancelled	9	5	1	15
Totals	606	128	24	758

Of the 199 contracts still in operation and shown under (a), 140 are now in their third year of apprenticeship, 57 in their second year, and 2 in their first year.

The 167 contracts shown in (c) as being suspended cover those apprentices who have enlisted in the armed forces. By regulation made under the Public Safety Conservation Act, 1932, provision was made for these apprentices to continue their apprenticeships on the termination of service with the armed forces if they so desire.

SCHEME No. 16A : SUBSIDIZING OF WORKERS IN INDUSTRY.

This scheme, which covers a two-and-a-half year apprenticeship in the boot-manufacturing industry, provides for a subsidy commencing at £1 15s. per week with a commencing wage of £4 5s. The subsidy reduces by 5s. each six months until at the end of the fourth half-year it reduces to 10s. for the final six months ; the weekly wage increases by 5s. each six months until £5 is reached, and this amount is the maximum wage for the last year of the apprenticeship.

Men for employment under the scheme are recruited from those unskilled workers who have for at least six months been engaged under Scheme No. 13 or those engaged in an unskilled capacity with a Government Department.

The operation of the clause in the various apprenticeship orders relating to the permissible proportion of apprentices to journeymen has adversely affected placements under this scheme, a total of only 16 men having been engaged since the scheme commenced in August, 1939. The position concerning these contracts at the 5th April, 1941, was as follows :—

Contracts in operation	11
Contracts terminated	4
Contracts expired	1
	16

As mentioned elsewhere in this report, the boot-manufacturing industry has been brought under the scheme introduced as a war measure for the training of auxiliary workers, and it is possible that, with the present uncertain state of affairs, the trade generally and the workers themselves will prefer to come under the auxiliary training scheme rather than undertake apprenticeships.