

The seriousness of the rabbit pest throughout the Dominion shows little change. In districts under Rabbit Board administration the pest is controlled and in many cases reduced to a minimum. Boards in Hawke's Bay are making great efforts in the fight against the menace, which is particularly bad in that area. A shortage of skilled rabbiters and housing is limiting the efforts of a number of Boards.

In a number of districts outside Board control the pest has increased. No permanent improvement can be expected in areas where extermination work is spasmodic and where the commercial value of the rabbit tends to discourage killing operations during the spring and summer, when skin values are low. It is hoped that through the agency of the Rabbit Destruction Council there will be an early substantial increase in the number of Rabbit boards.

Rabbit Boards now number 108, covering an area of about 18,000,000 acres. During the year subsidies paid to Boards on rates collected amounted to £91,713.

NOXIOUS WEEDS

Efforts of land-occupiers in dealing with noxious weeds were, in the main, confined to the better-class land. A shortage of chlorate weedicides was experienced last year because of the reluctance of shipping companies to handle this material after an explosion on a ship discharging sodium chlorate at Melbourne. This shortage precluded more effective work being undertaken in certain districts.

The report of the special Noxious Weeds Committee was considered and adopted at the most recent conference of the New Zealand Counties Association. The recommendations made by the Committee have now been placed before the Government.

Forty counties have now taken over the administration of the Act, and, in general, good work is being accomplished. Finance has been made available by the Department to enable weeds to be dealt with on unoccupied Crown and Maori lands and lands of indigent farmers.
