

as possible. The area is expected to come into maximum production next season, and should provide information on the possibilities of dairying on light land under irrigation in Canterbury at the earliest possible time. Such information would be invaluable for future settlement and production. The experience of this unit has already indicated that ample feed suitable for the production of butterfat, together with the provision of winter feed, is close to becoming a certainty under irrigation on this particular class of land.

The mixed-farm unit of 350 acres is in the process of development to a plan constructed by the advisory committee. The handicaps to its quick establishment are difficulties associated with fencing-materials, and lack of shearing shed and yards, dip, and implement accommodation. The fencing position is the most acute, as subdivision is essential to irrigation development and without it no headway can be made. At present, 500 ewes are being carried; 110 acres have been border dyked and sown in permanent pasture. The remainder of the area is being systematically cleaned and winter feed and green feed grown.

The development of the research area of 250 acres is handicapped even more seriously than the mixed-farm area. Lack of buildings and fencing-materials are the chief difficulties. A series of experiments has been laid down during the summer and autumn months of this year, and the whole area is under cultivation with the objective of cleaning the land and preparing it for irrigation.

FERTILIZERS

Rationing.—The rationing of phosphatic fertilizers was continued during the season. For top-dressing, the allocation was increased from 50·4 per cent. to 67·2 per cent. of the quantities used in the average of the two base years ended 31st May, 1941. This has meant an increase of one-third over the quantities allocated the previous year. Increases were also made for the sowing of grass seed on cultivated land in the North Island from 1½ cwt. to 3 cwt. an acre and in the South Island from 1½ cwt. to 2 cwt. an acre.

Importations.—For the fertilizer year July, 1947, to June, 1948, it is estimated that approximately 380,000 tons will have been imported. Supplies from Nauru and Ocean Islands have been more plentiful, and for the full year it is estimated they will approximate almost half of the total imports of raw rock phosphate. Both basic slag (20,000 tons) and North African phosphate (21,000 tons) were imported, as were limited quantities of nitrogenous and potassic fertilizers.

Transport.—The delivery of lime and fertilizer has been retarded sometimes because of the limited number of railway trucks available for the purpose and also because of shortages of labour at the works. To assist the transport of fertilizers, arrangements were made to subsidize road transport up to one hundred miles from works and also to use water transport for deliveries to certain areas when railway trucks were in short supply.

The free railage concession applicable to lime ceased as from 12th October, 1947, and was replaced by the Lime Transport Assistance Scheme, which came into operation on 24th November, 1947. Authority has now been given for the back-dating of lime-transport assistance to the earlier date to overcome any hardships resulting from the lapse of time between the ending of free railage and the beginning of lime-transport assistance.

NASSELLA TUSsock

Eradication measures against nasella tussock are being carried out in badly affected areas under the direction of the two special Boards set up in North Canterbury and Marlborough.