

1937

ANNUAL REPORT
of the
BUREAU OF INSECT PEST CONTROL

For the opening month of the fiscal year the Bureau program calls for a Gypsy Moth defoliation survey by all division supts. This survey was in progress as usual and the reports in process of compilation when hurricanes Carol and Edna struck. All of our personnel and equipment were immediately placed on stand-by emergency basis. As no specific orders followed we affiliated with those towns adjoining our Stow headquarters for several days of main road clearance and then concentrated on opening access roads to fire towers. Later our total energies went into timber salvage at Willowdale State Forest where a valuable pine stand had suffered great damage. Through the use of careful planning in this salvage operation much more saleable timber was marketed than would have resulted from a contractor operation. Not only did the state receive more income from this devastated area but it was also completed in less than 2 weeks. One timber operator who witnessed the operation stated that he would not have believed it possible for a crew of our size, and in such a short space of time, to have "salvaged so much so quickly so neatly."

There being no further calls for our services in this field of work our activities were transferred to the Dutch elm disease program which had been neglected for nearly five months. This five months lapse was the very critical period when our complete attention should have been concentrated on removal of condemned elms. At the exact time we urge the individual towns to devote their time and funds to the prompt removal of condemned elms, which is also the time when they have most reason to expect aid and assistance from us, we disappear from the picture for several months.

As soon as defoliation records were in final tabulation the Bureau Chief submitted a recommendation to the Board that an aerial spraying was

indicated for a 1955 Region that would encompass the northern half of Norfolk County, a portion of Middlesex County and the eastern half of Worcester County - a total of 66 adjoining towns, plus the separate but heavily infested area of Lynnfield and Peabody. In addition to the foregoing the Board included another Regional area of 15 towns in southern Berkshire County. With this total of 83 towns another Regional project was set up on the planning table. A detailed report of the actual spray application is attached. That project was completed a week earlier than any previous aerial project. This gave us an opportunity to have our spray equipment back at headquarters checked, cleaned and stored before the end of the fiscal year. For a short period we felt that we could complete the defoliation survey and resume the D.E.D. work in normal fashion. However, in just 30 days from the completion of the Regional spray project we started an emergency aerial treatment of some 200,000 acres in Barnstable County. Once again our efforts to maintain any semblance of an organized program has been disrupted and at this writing three supts. have been left behind to take defoliation, three have been transferred to the Cape spray job and the D.E.D. work, which should be in full swing, is dormant.

1. - D.E.D.

Several previous reports have stated the impossibility of our maintaining anything resembling a program. The foregoing paragraph only emphasizes how seriously our lack of personnel affects the work of the Bureau. The legislation which has placed Dutch elm disease, poison ivy and Japanese beetle under jurisdiction of this department has, in every case, been on the emergency basis. This would seem to indicate that, in the case of D.E.D. for instance, a prompt attention was expected in preparing a program and that such a program would operate on a businesslike economical manner. For at least two full seasons now our efforts on D.E.D. have been an actual waste,

because our only opportunity to devote any time to the program has been after the serious or emergency work should have been done. In addition we furnished no assistance to cooperating towns who tried to follow the very recommendations which we ourselves ignore.

Dutch elm disease has increased greatly this season and many towns finding themselves unable to cope with their local conditions are turning more and more to us for assistance. We have felt for sometime that if any single item of Bureau work should be removed from town cooperation to complete state jurisdiction it is this D.E.D. problem. Too few towns are actually operating a well-planned and properly timed program, while too many are expending sizeable appropriations for work done too late. These funds are actually wasted and the total lack of any visible progress is detracting from the possibility that control ever can be attained. Such assistance as we have been able to give for 2 years has been of little value, either - mainly because it has also been at the wrong time, and our continuance in, or participation with, further wasteful procedures simply gives apparent approval of the present slip shod methods. We do not have sufficient supervisory personnel to give proper attention to the problem at a time when the delinquent towns should have constant contact with us, who are supposed to be their main source of correct information. We have no basis for complaint when the town man, unable to have the services of his state supervisor, turns to "tree Expert" companies, experiment stations and even insecticide salesmen for information and advice. These varying and often misleading sources of information simply intensify our problem of trying to initiate a single policy of procedure. So far as this particular disease is concerned honesty compels our stating that if the department cannot have men and equipment to manage the control program efficiently and economically we should be relieved of any further participation.

2. - Poison Ivy & Japanese Beetle.

Both above items are recent additions to our Bureau activities, and we can only report that there has been no activity. The only reason is again lack of proper and sufficient manpower and supervision. During the season when control work should be in full swing on both items our entire force is concentrated on an aerial spray project or a defoliation survey. Although the situation has been explained many times before it might be of help to again state that our inability to give attention to all of the insects and diseases committed to our charge is that we still have only the same staff that we had in 1945 to handle 3 insects. Since 1945 a new insect or disease has been added until we now have a total of 9 major activities, plus the Regional spray act which alone is about all we can handle - in other words, at least 3 times as many jobs to do but with the same original number of employees. If all these insects and diseases could be treated at one time there would be no manpower problem, but it is impossible for one man to work 15 hours a day on an aerial spray project, be cutting down a condemned elm tree, be spraying for poison ivy in one town and applying Jap beetle treatment in another town all in one day. However the very wording of the legislative acts that added these various duties implies that we should be in several places at once, because not one piece of legislation even mentions how the additional work is to be covered. Until such time as required attention is given to our need of further employees is corrected and a proper reclassification of present employees is completed nothing can be accomplished on other duties except aerial spraying and our meagre attempts at D.E.D. control. The effect of this Bureau problem extends beyond the department as well. The millions of dollars being expended on scenic highways and recreation areas will be no attraction if trees are not present in their natural condition. Neither our state residents nor visitors will patronize

picnic tables with poison ivy present. At a very small comparative cost the Bureau could be properly manned and equipped, and thus enabled to protect the scenic attractions the state now possesses. But what is equally important we could, with sufficient personnel and adequate equipment, use our present experience and know-how as the basis for promptly proceeding on an efficient and economical 5-year program, which is the Board's desire, instead of the constantly interrupted method now in effect.