

south-western Iceland (in all six districts), but has now split up into a number of independent societies. The majority of the farmers in these districts are members of the societies, and have their slaughter-sheep killed at the slaughter-houses, which also handle the sale, at home and abroad, both of the meat and by-products. In other districts the slaughter-houses have amalgamated with the purchase and sale associations, or the societies themselves have taken up slaughtering and the sale of meat etc.

### STEPS TAKEN FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF FARMING

A little before the middle of the nineteenth century a number of *societies* began to be formed in different parts of the country for the promotion of agriculture and farming in general, with a special view to levelling, draining and irrigation. These societies were on a very limited scale, and generally confined to one parish each. In course of time their number gradually increased, though not very considerably till after 1887, when they began to receive annual government grants. This support was granted them in proportion to the improvement work done in the preceding year, and in 1893, 90 such societies were receiving government grants for the improvement of estates; in 1916 their number had swelled to 159. During the last years of the Great War many of them had to suspend activities, owing to dearth and other difficulties consequent on the War, and in 1920 only 97 societies were receiving support from the public funds for work done for the improvement of estates. Thenceforward their number has been growing, and in 1927 there were in all about 200 parish agricultural societies in the country. The work done by these bodies amounted to 34 000 dayworks in 1893, and, increasing steadily year by year, it rose to 158 000 in 1912. The next following six years show a decline, and in 1918 the dayworks done were but 68 000. Then, however, there was again a gradual rise up to 100 000 in 1921—1923. But the Improvement of Estates Act has given such an impetus to the work that for 1927 no less than 500 000 dayworks are recorded. The societies have laid particular stress on improving the cultivation of the homefields and meadows: the former by levelling and fencing; the latter by making irrigation canals, ditches and dams.

An act of Althingi passed in 1903 provided for an annual government grant of one hundred thousand krónur for several years for the acquisition of *barbed wire fences*; the purchase of material and its distribution was under the supervision of the government. This measure