

1946  
NEW ZEALAND

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DEPARTMENT OF LANDS AND SURVEY  
**RANGITAIKI LAND DRAINAGE**

REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH, 1946

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*Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly in pursuance of Section 10 of the Rangitaiki Land Drainage Act, 1910*

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Department of Lands and Survey, Wellington, 28th June, 1946.

SIR,—

I have the honour to submit herewith the report of the Chief Drainage Engineer on drainage operations on the Rangitaiki Plains for the year ended 31st March, 1946, pursuant to the provisions of the Rangitaiki Land Drainage Act, 1910.

I have, &c.,

R. G. MACMORRAN,

Under-Secretary for Lands.

The Hon. the Minister of Lands.

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REPORT OF THE CHIEF DRAINAGE ENGINEER

SIR,—

In accordance with the provisions of the Rangitaiki Land Drainage Act, 1910, I have the honour to submit a report on the work carried out during the year ended 31st March, 1946.

The rainfall recorded at Thornton, for the twelve months ended 31st March, 1946, was 30.36 in., rain falling on seventy-seven days. This is an exceptionally low annual rainfall, the average over the last twenty-eight years being 49.58 in. The wettest month was May, 1945, with 7.52 in., and the driest February, with 0.23 in. The heaviest fall occurred on the 18th May, when 4.20 in. was recorded. During the summer exceptional drought conditions were experienced, and for the four months November, December, January, and February the total rainfall was only 1.94 in. At the end of this period many drains in the district were dry, and record low levels were recorded in the rivers and canals. This caused excessive growth of weeds in the drains and will greatly increase the cost of the annual drain-cleaning this autumn.

Considering the conditions mentioned above, it is not surprising that the output of dairy-produce from the district is less than last year. The dairy factory at Edgecumbe, which is supplied by the farms of the district, manufactured 4,365 tons of butter for the year ended 31st March, 1946, compared with the previous year's figures of 4,711 tons. The peak year was 1941, when the output was over 5,000 tons. The small drop of  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. on last year's figures indicates what commendable efforts the settlers have made to maintain production, and also shows the great value of low-lying land in times of low rainfall.

The topographical and soil survey is still being carried forward, and some 49.7 square miles of country have now been covered with a preliminary network of levels and bore holes. This comprised the taking of 107 miles 17 chains of levels and the sinking of 277 boreholes to a depth of from 10 ft. to 30 ft. during the year. Automatic river-stage