

The ferry service over the Piako River at Kaihere was maintained satisfactorily during the year. A new pontoon was constructed by an Auckland firm and towed to Kerepeehi. After transferring all useful gear from the old pontoon to the new one, reconditioning the winding-gear, and fitting a new engine the ferry service was again brought into operation on 6th December, after being closed since 5th November to enable this change-over to be completed. The new ferry has been entirely satisfactory, and the service has been uninterrupted since it was brought into operation.

The flaxmill at Kerepeehi, which is engaged in milling flax from natural and planted stands on Crown land near the Piako River, continued its operations during the year. For the year ended 31st March, 1949, this mill handled 2,086 tons of green leaf, from which the royalties payable to the Crown amounted to £260.

Owing to the even spread of rainfall during the winter, the flood-pump on the Kerepeehi Block was only required to operate for a total of 119½ hours, which is one of the shortest annual operating times on record since the completion of the station in 1935. Nevertheless, this short running-time was sufficient to keep the stop-banked area of 3,890 acres served by the pump free from flooding.

The workshop staff of fitters, blacksmiths, &c., has been fully engaged in maintaining excavators, cars, trucks, tractors, and machinery. The carpenters completed the cottage under erection at Kerepeehi, and, in addition to maintenance of all buildings, have reconstructed two cow-sheds, built two piggeries, reconstructed the Kaihere Ferry, added a useful extension to the fitting-shop, and completed the construction of the Awaitei South pump-station.

Arrangements have been made for the field and engineering work associated with this Department's drainage activities to be undertaken by the Ministry of Works as from 1st April, 1949.

The principal works carried out on the Hauraki Plains during the year are listed hereunder:—

	Miles.	ch.
Drains cleaned by manual labour on wages	69	63
Drains cleaned by manual labour on contract	30	68½
Drains widened and deepened by manual labour on wages	20	34
Drains widened and deepened by manual labour on contract	0	43
New drains constructed by manual labour on contract	4	59½
Canals widened and deepened by excavator	1	47
Canals cleaned by excavator	0	69
Drains widened and deepened by excavator	9	52
Stop-bank raised by excavator	3	6
Roads formed by power-grader	2	10
Roads graded by power-grader and bulldozer	9	40
Roads metalled	0	25
	Acres.	
Area harrowed by tractor	1,100	
Area stumped by tractor	350	
Area crushed and disked by tractor	750	
Area sown in grass	750	

Other work included the completion of Awaitei South pump-station; repairs to Pipiroa flood-gate; completion of cottage; erection of access bridges, culverts; installation and maintenance of water-supplies; painting and repairs to buildings; repairs and maintenance of excavators, trucks, tractors, pumps, flood-gates, machinery; eradication of willows and noxious weeds; and care of stock and pastures.