

With the decision of the contributing Governments to adopt the recommendations of the South Pacific Air Transport Council and proceed with the development of a new international civil airport at Suva Point, Fiji, steps are in hand to commence the necessary engineering survey and investigations at that site.

OTHER WORK FOR ISLAND TERRITORIES DEPARTMENT IN THE PACIFIC ISLANDS

At Rarotonga (Cook Islands) the construction of a central Diesel-power electric generating-station is well forward together with overhead pole reticulation lines and consumer household wiring.

At Niue Island a shaft 180 ft. deep through coral has been sunk to provide well water to augment the island water-supply.

The erection of 3 residences for Island Territories Department officials has been commenced and improvement works have been undertaken on a number of minor buildings and island facilities.

LAND IMPROVEMENTS

Kaipara Harbour Reclamation.—On the Glorit Block work has consisted of cleaning out and renovating all main and lateral drains and of repairing and reconstructing fences. Drains and fences had deteriorated very considerably in recent years.

It has been found necessary to raise and widen the stopbank throughout its entire length of 300 chains, and this work has been commenced. Major repairs to both Nos. 1 and 2 water-supply bores are in hand.

On the Kukutango and Oyster Point Blocks major repairs were necessary to make good damage caused by high tide and storm in June, 1947, and again in September, 1948. The crest of the stopbanks on both blocks was damaged by sea-water action in many places and repairs are proceeding with the few men available for the work.

Land-clearing.—In Southland the output of land-clearing was reduced by the diversion of plant to coal-stripping at Ohai. In spite of this, 1,827 acres of stumps and second growth were cleared for farmers or the Lands Department, 3 miles 51 chains of farm access roads were constructed, 12 miles 62 chains of drainage channels were excavated to dry out swamps, and 40 chains of stopbanks were erected to protect farm lands from flooding.

At Ohakune 650 acres have been stumped and 195 acres have been rooted. Some short lengths of access roads and tramways have been constructed.

Sand-dune Reclamation.—In the Hokio-Manawatu area the weather has been very good for the raising of seedlings and planting out of trees, but heavy winds and dry weather in the spring interfered seriously with the establishment of marram plants and lupin seed.

In the nursery 94,000 seedlings were lined out and 200,000 seedlings raised. Five new single men's huts were erected and a new fire-watching tower built near the nursery.

In the field 99,000 trees were planted out and are doing well and 17,500 bundles of marram were planted with 400 lb. of broadcasted lupin seed, but much of this was blown out in the November gales and will have to be replanted. Constant lookout was maintained from the fire-towers, and during the dry period 20 fires on the beach were extinguished by the patrol men.

At North Waikato Heads, in addition to maintenance of existing plantations, clearing of tree lines, fire-breaks, &c., an area of 238 acres was planted in marram grass and a total area of 258 acres was planted in trees. New internal roads formed amounted to 395 chains and 131 chains of new roads were clayed.

At Woodhill, steady progress was made throughout the year despite scarcity of suitable labour for tree-planting. The main activities, other than planting and general maintenance, consisted of improving the existing access road and new road-formation.