

SESSION II.  
1912.  
NEW ZEALAND.

# WANGANUI RIVER TRUST

(ANNUAL REPORT OF THE).

*Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.*

## WANGANUI RIVER TRUST.

MEMBERS.—Messrs. T. D. Cummins, Government nominee (Chairman); T. B. Williams, W. G. Bassett, J. T. Stewart, elected by the ratepayers of Wanganui Borough; David McFarlane, President of Chamber of Commerce; W. Ritchie, Chairman of Waitotara County Council; J. W. Polson, Chairman of Wanganui County Council; W. A. Veitch, M.P., Wanganui; G. V. Pearce, M.P., Patea; C. E. Mackay, Mayor of Wanganui.

EXTRACT FROM REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH, 1912, BY THE CHAIRMAN, MR. T. D. CUMMINS, TO THE UNDER-SECRETARY FOR LANDS.

I have pleasure in furnishing you with a report of the operations of the Wanganui River Trust for the year ended 31st March, 1912.

I would first say that, in marked contrast to the previous year, which was the most favourable for working, through the low conditions of river experienced by a protracted drought, the period just ended gave little opportunities for much work being performed, and the work has been more costly owing to the intermittent stoppages from flood-water and freshets. As showing the difference in the river-level, I may remark that when my annual visit of inspection was made in 1911 the water-gauge at Pipiriki showed 41½ in. below the mark on Hatrick's gauge, which was probably the lowest known or recorded since the inception of the work—this was on the 27th February, 1911. My annual visit of inspection on the present occasion was commenced on the 4th April, and the gauge at Pipiriki showed 29 in. below the mark, which was the lowest found at any time during the present working season. All the tributaries feeding the river were discharging a fair quantity of water, and throughout the season this obtained. My visit being made during the Easter holidays, the steamers and launches were carrying full complements of passengers and cargo, yet, though heavily laden, none of the steamers or launches found bottom in the whole 144 miles between Wanganui and Taumarunui; neither was it necessary, except at a few places, to have resort to hauling over rapids with the winch and steel-wire ropes, as is usual during low conditions of the river, the use of the poles being in most cases sufficient to help over the difficult places.

I was very much and favourably impressed with the result of the work that has been done at the top end of the river, say, from Taumarunui seven miles down-stream. This portion of the river has given much anxiety, owing to the banks and bed of the river being composed of shingle. From time to time works that were completed and showed good results had to again receive attention, owing to scour by contraction of the channel due to the training-walls and the consequent sinking of the wire net and shingle walls constructed. The continual scour has, however, resulted in the channel being swept clear of shingle, and the sunken walls (in some places rebuilt on) are now resting on the papa formation, and the channels also are in most places on a clean papa bottom. These are now approaching permanent works, as the walls are resting on the papa.

The traffic on the river, both for passengers and cargo, has increased, more especially down-stream from Taumarunui. A very large number of tourists have been carried down-stream, and the wayside traffic with passengers and cargo has materially increased, particularly, as previously mentioned, in the upper reaches.

The necessity for procuring a properly equipped launch, which has been referred to in my last and previous reports, is still an urgent matter, and I sincerely trust that a sufficient sum will be placed on the estimates this session of the House for procuring such a vessel. A model of the proposed launch, with a copy of the specifications, was provided with my last report, and it is found that the cost will be about £1,250. This sum has been requested to be allocated for the work. It is considered that with this launch, which would be fitted with derrick and winch sufficient to raise boulders and snags, one working-party would be sufficient for maintenance and general work, as the expensive moving of the