

1915.

NEW ZEALAND.

WANGANUI RIVER TRUST

(ANNUAL REPORT OF THE) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH, 1915.

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

MEMBERS.—Messrs. T. D. Cummins, Government nominee (Chairman); W. A. Veitch, M.P. for Wanganui; G. V. Pearce, M.P. for Patea; Alan Robinson, Chairman, Wanganui County Council; Donald Ross, Chairman, Waitotara County Council; Alfred Burnett, Chairman of the Wanganui Chamber of Commerce; W. G. Bassett, T. B. Williams, and J. H. Burnet, elected by the ratepayers of Wanganui [Note—Mr. T. B. Williams is also Mayor of Wanganui].

REPORT TO UNDER-SECRETARY FOR LANDS.

Wanganui, 10th April, 1915.

I have to report that during the past working season, owing to the limited finances at the disposal of the Trust, there has been less accomplished in the way of permanent improvements than usual. The efforts of the Trust have been mainly directed in keeping the river-channel open for traffic and repairing walls. Some permanent work has, however, been effected, notably lengthening the stone wall at Ruangarahu (No. 84) and also at Upokopoito (No. 228), where a stone wall has been run out from the foot of the island, making the entrance to the channel easier, and also lower down stream by adding to the stone wall from the right bank at the foot of this rapid. The work here (Upokopoito) has been costly.

Shingle in the lower reaches of the river is so small as to be unsuitable for building or constructing shingle and wire-net walls, and large stone is only procurable at a considerable distance from the work. In some cases stone had to be carried on punts seven to eight miles, and the empty punts hauled up-stream against a swift-running current, making the work costly. The work, however, is permanent, and the results satisfactory.

A very considerable quantity of snagging has been done in the lower reaches and from Wanganui to Pipiriki—the first section of the river. The channel is now fairly good, even in low conditions of the river.

At Matahiwi (No. 212) some alteration to the existing stone walls is necessary, as the side-wheel steamers have some difficulty in negotiating this rapid in certain conditions of the river. This, however, is not of immediate importance.

On the second section of the river—that is, from Pipiriki to the Houseboat—a considerable quantity of snagging and removal of stones and boulders has been effected, principally between rapids 53 and 91; and shingle wire-net walls have been repaired at Makomako (104) and Kahuitara (91), below the Houseboat. The snagging, however, was only a temporary measure to ensure traffic being uninterrupted, and will require to be again carefully overlooked and extended down-stream to as far as Ngaporo (189).

Ngaporo rapid, some few miles above Pipiriki, will require attention in the near future, as the shingle has scoured down to the papa formation and dropped the walls, thus lessening the efficiency of the structure, and also the wire netting is much damaged and requires considerable repairs.

The third section of the river—that is, from the Houseboat to Taumarunui—has had little or no attention during the past two years other than an addition to the stone wall at Ruangarahu (84). The extension of this wall was not completed, however. I am constrained to say that this section has not had the attention it required in the way of maintenance, and several of the walls have fallen into bad order and will prove costly to repair—indeed, in one instance a new wall will be necessary—nevertheless the previous good work done on this section, even despite the walls being in disrepair, is apparent, and traffic has been regularly maintained under most trying conditions of an exceptionally low river. Resort had to be made, however, in several places, both on this section and below the Houseboat, where the river widens out and there are shingle-bars, to dig out temporary channels.

The season has been a most difficult and trying one for the steamer-proprietors. It has been unusual to meet with such low rivers during the months of December to February as has been experienced, and it is distinctly creditable that the service has been uninterrupted.