

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.

I can unhesitatingly say that the river service still continues an important factor in opening and developing the country adjacent to the river, and this is evidenced by the largely increased goods traffic from both the Wanganui and Taumarunui ends.

From Wanganui the service is handled by the steamers leaving Wanganui for Pipiriki together three times weekly, carrying cargo and passengers for wayside landings, and also from Taumarunui to Pipiriki three times weekly. The tourist traffic, even despite curtailment due to the war, is considerable, and no doubt under ordinary circumstances would have been a record one. Downstream from Pipiriki the passenger-list is generally a full one, comprising settlers and tourists. During the wool season the boats are fully laden, and it is noticeable that larger quantities of wool are carried each succeeding year. The increasing revenue derived from tolls on cargo is ample evidence of the growing importance of the river as a highway.

In concluding my report I would voice the opinion that the future of the Trust is such that without better arrangements are made for its continuance it will be for all time a struggling body, unable to deal with a valuable asset to the Dominion—strangled for want of sufficient financial assistance. The present system of having to wait for parliamentary subsidies is, to say the least, a crude one, and has in the past proved cumbersome and expensive. I may point out that the present revenue of the Trust from its endowment is only £201 8s. 8d. per annum, and tolls from goods carried by river steamers £200. The maintenance of 130 miles of river (cutting out the fourteen miles controlled by the Harbour Board) is a serious matter, more especially as the river improvement works have not approached the stage of completion, and there is still yet much to be done in that direction. The Trust has had to be content in the past with Government subsidies, and I would here point out that there is no certainty of these, or to what extent Parliament may from time to time subsidize the Trust. Again, the subsidies are not usually granted till the end of the parliamentary session—usually in November—whereas the active work on the river should be commenced in September, and preparation of material, &c., at a much earlier date.

I would offer a suggestion that a Commission should be set up during the next session of the House to take into consideration a better system of providing financial assistance, so that the work on the river could be proceeded with in a more systematic and economical manner.

I append a schedule showing the work that is necessary, and an estimated cost of the same.

T. D. CUMMINS, Chairman.

SCHEDULE SHOWING CONDITION OF CONSTRUCTED WALLS OR GROYNES ON RIVER FROM TAUMARUNUI TO WANGANUI, AND ALSO NECESSARY WORK REQUIRED TO PUT THE RIVER-CHANNEL INTO WORKING CONDITION FOR THE SAFE PASSAGE OF STEAMERS AND LAUNCHES.

[NOTE.—The cost of work is estimated. The names and numbers of the several rapids, shallows, or places where work is necessary and mentioned are to be found on reference to the map of the Wanganui River compiled by the late Mr. J. T. Stewart in 1903.]

Number and Name of Rapid, and Remarks as to Requirements and Condition.			Probable Cost of Work.		
			£	s.	d.
2. Pungahuru No. 1.—Requires new cap netting and lacing down	...	...	10	10	0
4. Rurumaiakatea.—New wire netting and lacing down and filling	...	...	20	0	0
6. Te Miro.—Rough stone wall from right bank (3 chains), also large stones to be removed from channel	...	...	30	0	0
11. Kokirae.—Stones and large boulders to be removed	...	...	5	0	0
12. Pokaka.—Stones and large boulders to be removed	...	...	5	0	0
15. Rakauwhakamatuku.—A new wall urgently required from left bank, to be constructed of large stones	...	...	72	0	0
17. Porokurangi.—A new wire-net wall is urgently required from the left bank (about 2 chains)	...	...	48	0	0
23. Titakataka.—Left-hand wall now there requires to be lengthened and straightened	...	...	20	0	0
26. Omaka.—Wall from right bank requires repairs	...	...	15	0	0
27. Auhauoa No. 1.—Wall requires to be extended 2½ chains	...	...	60	0	0
30. Onepoto.—Boulders to be removed	...	...	7	10	0
31. Manawanawa.—Boulders to be removed from channel	...	...	10	0	0
33. Pouwhakamaru.—Left-hand wire-net wall requires repairs	...	...	12	10	0
35. Motutara.—New wall, to be constructed of wire net and shingle, is urgently required here (about 8 chains), and will cost about	...	...	160	0	0
36. Te Hinau.—This is a long shallow. A wall would be better here, although not as urgent as other places, and can be held over.					
38 and 39. Te Rua a Te Namu.—These are shallows, and would be better for walls to be constructed; these can be held over meanwhile.					
40. Te Rata.—Boulders require to be removed from channel	...	...	15	0	0
45. Otunui.—A landing-wharf is badly wanted here	...	...	75	0	0
46. Te Pera.—Boulders require to be removed from channel	...	...	10	0	0
51. Omarutihona.—A wire-net and shingle wall required from the left bank	...	...	72	0	0
53. Okupae.—Papa in mid-channel requires removal	...	...	8	0	0
56. Taura Kawau.—Wall required from left bank	...	...	72	0	0
57. Toka Ate Atua.—Papa to be removed	...	...	10	0	0
58. Komako.—Wall from left bank is necessary. Large stone is available here for this wall	...	...	80	0	0
61. Paparoa.—Stones to be removed from top of rapid	...	...	10	0	0

Number and Name of Rapid, and Remarks as to Requirements and Condition.	Probable Cost of Work.		
	£	s.	d.
67. Arataua.—This place is rather shallow. A wire-net and shingle wall of about 4 chains from the right bank would improve the shallow ...	50	0	0
72. Te Ruawhakainga.—This place is very shallow and requires a wall of shingle and wire net (about 3 chains) ...	40	0	0
73. Te Auroa.—Wall urgently required from right bank, 3 chains in length ...	40	0	0
75. Herepu.—Wall 7 chains long to replace old wall from the right bank (shingle and wire net) ...	90	0	0
76. Otuiti.—Wharf or landing required ...	75	0	0
80. Kirikau.—A hard papa reef in mid-channel requires removal by blasting ...	10	0	0
84. Ruangarahu.—Repairs to stone wall required (about 3 chains); large stones are available in the vicinity ...	30	0	0
87. Kakahi.—Some papa requires removal by blasting from mid-channel ...	10	0	0
91. Kahuitara.—The lower end of this shallow requires a stone wall from the right bank (stones are available); length of wall, about 5 chains ...	120	0	0
91. Kahuitara.—The existing wall from the right bank requires repairing ...	15	0	0
97. Mangaohotu.—Wharf wanted from left bank ...	75	0	0
105. Whakatara.—There is a long shallow in this reach that has given a deal of trouble. It urgently requires attention (shingle and wire net, about 5 chains) ...	120	0	0
106. Kaiwhakauka.—Papa reef requires to be blasted out from the left bank ...	15	0	0
108. Otahua.—The stone wall from the right bank requires extending about 3 chains ...	72	0	0
110. Waikoriri.—A large shell rock in mid-stream requires to be blasted out and removed ...	30	0	0
111. Kawhaiturua.—This is a very bad shallow, and requires a wall from the right bank (about 10 chains) ...	240	0	0
116. Owairua.—A large snag in mid-stream requires removal ...	10	0	0
122. Horowhenua.—A wall from left bank is urgently wanted (8 chains); no large stone available ...	160	0	0
128. Tarepokiore.—Shell rock on point, left bank, requires removal ...	20	0	0
135. Ohineika.—Stone wall from right bank to be lengthened (2 chains) ...	48	0	0
138. Arawhata.—Wall required from left bank (4 chains) ...	96	0	0
141. Whaokete No. 2.—Stone wall from right bank (3 chains) ...	72	0	0
149. Opuraho.—The wall from the right bank now existing should be raised, also a short wall run from left bank at the foot ...	60	0	0
151. Nikotapu.—A wall is required from the left bank, stone is handy (4 chains) ...	90	0	0
155. Reperepe.—Snags to be removed to widen channel... ...	10	0	0
165. Te Aukopae to			
189. Ngaporo.—A considerable quantity of snagging is required between Nos. 165 and 189. It is estimated that it will take one party working with a punt two months to clear this locality ...	120	0	0
179. Tangahoe.—Stone wall required from left bank (about 4 chains) ...	92	0	0
183. Raumanui.—Stone wall required from left bank (about 4 chains) ...	92	0	0
184. Omaika.—Stone wall from right bank requires repairs and lengthening (2 chains) ...	25	0	0
185. Puahue.—The stone wall existing on right bank requires raising ...	15	0	0
186. Arawhata.—Stone wall from right bank requires to be raised ...	20	0	0
187. Matarewa.—The present stone wall requires to be lifted and placed further upstream and across stream to confine water against the papa face to the left bank; also extended 1 chain ...	50	0	0
188. Parakiwai.—Shingle and wire-net wall required from the right bank; there are no stones available in the vicinity (6 chains) ...	144	0	
189. Ngaporo.—It is difficult to estimate the cost of repairing the walls on this rapid. It has always been a troublesome place, and considerable expenditure has been already made there. The run is very swift, and there are no large stones suitable for the work in the vicinity. In the past the work has been done with wire-net and shingle walls. It is a dangerous rapid and difficult to control. It is difficult to estimate the cost—say ...	150	0	0
— Opihaka.—This rapid is not shown on the map. It is a small rapid, but has given a lot of trouble. There is a short run out from the tail of the shingle-bed on the left bank. This wall requires to be extended some 50 ft., and the existing wall on the right bank should be raised and extended 60 ft. ...	40	0	0
196. Paparoa (Upper).—A stone wall of 5 chains is necessary here from the left bank ...	120	0	0
205. Kauaeroa.—Some large stones require to be removed from the channel ...	10	0	0
206. Haumoana.—The right-hand wall requires to be lengthened ...	15	0	0
207. Moutoa.—The stone wall from the left bank (the second wall) requires repairs, also to be extended some 2 chains ...	60	0	0
208. Kaitete.—A wall from the left bank is required (3 chains) ...	72	0	0
210. Kaiwaka (Kawana).—Stones and boulders to remove from channel; also requires a stone wall (say 6 chains) ...	144	0	0

Number and Name of Rapid, and Remarks as to Requirements and Condition.						Probable Cost of Work. £ s. d.		
212.	Matahiwi.	—At Matahiwi there are at present stone walls from both banks. The steamer-proprietors urge that the channel between the walls is dangerous for side-wheel steamers. I may mention that this channel was attempted by the Public Works Department before the Trust took control. The proper course to pursue would be to lift the walls from the right bank and make the channel on the left bank. This is, however, a costly proposition, and will run into probably	...	...	...	600	0	0
217.	Opohe to Tauterata (227).	—A considerable number of snags require to be removed, and it will be necessary to remove boulders by blasting	...	...	...	60	0	0
232.	Ohaoa.	—Straightening the existing wall and lengthening by 4 chains (stone wall)	...	...	...	96	0	0
233.	Huiarere.	—Stone wall required from right bank (about 3 chains)	...	...	...	72	0	0
235.	Tupapa.	—Snagging and clearing channel	...	...	...	10	0	0
236.	Punakawhitu.	—Snagging and clearing channel	...	...	...	10	0	0
238.	Kanihinihi.	—Wall from right bank (stone) to be lengthened $1\frac{1}{2}$ chains and from left bank $2\frac{1}{2}$ chains	...	...	...	96	0	0
Total estimated cost of works as above						£4,538	10	0

In addition to the above the following expenditure is absolutely necessary for the continuance and carrying on the works referred to :—

	£	s.	d.
Repairs to punts and oil-engine hoist on one of the punts	95	0	0
Alterations to launch	10	0	0
Providing oil-engine hoist and hauling gear for launch	100	0	0
Total	205	0	0
Grand total	£4,743	10	0

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