

## CENTRAL DISTRICT.

An exceptionally large amount of new work has been completed in this district. Five sections were opened to returned soldiers by ballot—a total area of 1,414 acres; while a considerable amount of preparatory work in the shape of new drains, &c., was done, which will shortly result in the opening-up of further areas for soldiers.

The central area having a large amount of already settled land, the maintenance of the existing works has been a heavy item, but, fortunately, enough labour was on hand to cope with same.

As will be seen by detailed statement, the renewal of the old wooden flood-gates in reinforced concrete has been steadily pushed on. Building-work has also been extensively carried on, and several new wharves, staff quarters and huts, storage-sheds, &c., have been erected.

The work on the roads has been advanced by the acquisition of two hauling tractors, while a "White-Good road tractor" is on order. Metalling was carried out at several landings, details of which are shown hereafter. The grading, rolling, and repairing of roads was kept well up to the mark, and this district is now in a good state of efficiency generally.

The manufacture of Monier reinforced-concrete pipes has been continued at Hopai with very satisfactory results, the pipes being made in sizes ranging from 18 in. to 36 in. in diameter.

The blacksmith and shoeing shop at Hopai has seen a very busy year, and has been fitted up with several new machines and an engine, which has greatly increased the scope of work.

## WAITAKARURU DISTRICT.

There has been a very large expenditure in this block for the year, mainly in connection with the preparation of areas for discharged soldiers. In Block IV, Piako Survey District, thirty sections are now ready for ballot, ranging in size from 70 to 110 acres, of a total area of 2,944 acres.

The Ngarua 5A Block, which was acquired from the Natives, has also been prepared for settlement, there being nine sections, of an average of 77 acres, and aggregating 698 acres. Several reinforced-concrete culverts and tide-gates have been installed, some being of large size.

A contract was let for the construction of the unfinished portion of the deviation road through McDonald's property at Torehape, and 19 chains has been completed to date.

The construction of the Puketotara Road deviation was undertaken and is now completed. This road forms a short-cut from the Waitakaruru-Maramarua Road to the junction of North, South, and Cross Roads. Two bridges were erected on same in addition to pipe culverts. The grades on the hill portions of the Maramarua Road were also reduced. New double drains were constructed across the unopened peat country to the Waitakaruru-Maukoro Canal from the western end of Rawerawe and Ngatea West Roads, which will greatly facilitate the opening-up of this large peat area.

The maintenance work in connection with the roads and drains has been kept well in hand.

## PRIESTMAN DREDGES.

The No. 1 dredge has continued the canal from the Piako River junction along the Waitoa River, the distance completed for the year being 34 chains, making a total length of 167 chains. This dredge has not had a very successful year. Some trouble was experienced in procuring a suitable dredgemaster, and, owing to the difficult nature of the country passed through, progress was slow, while the amount of delays owing to breakdowns was much above the average. The dredge has also been taking a full cut practically for the whole distance. The progress at the present time is, however, very satisfactory, and the next year should show a marked improvement. The work ahead will allow of more of the Waitoa Stream being utilized in the canal and thus quicken up the work considerably. The portion of the canal already completed has had a very appreciable effect on the discharge of flood-waters in this district.

The No. 2 dredge has been employed on the continuation of the Waitakaruru Canal, and for the year has completed 56 chains. This completes the canal, and the dredge will now work back on line, removing a few slips, &c. The total length of the canal is 2 miles 37 chains. Several heavy freshes occurred during the course of this work, causing damage to the holding-dams and slowing up work to some extent. It is expected to have this dredge employed on the continuation of Waitakaruru-Maukoro Canal by next June, unless the overhaul, which is necessary, proves a larger job than anticipated.

The No. 6 dredge which was constructing the Awaiti Canal from the junction at Kerepechi proved incapable of carrying on without considerable repairs being effected and overhauling generally. This work occupied some months, owing to scarcity of materials. A change was made in the dredgemaster, and the dredge is now doing excellent work. The distance dredged for the year was 31 chains, making a total of 37 chains. It must be remembered, however, that the dredge has only been in good working-order for a portion of the year.

The following table shows the amount of spoil dredged and cost per cubic yard for the past eight years:—

					Cubic Yards.	Cost per Cubic Yard.
1912-13	...	...	...	...	131,902	3·25d.
1913-14	...	...	...	...	147,740	3·20d.
1914-15	...	...	...	...	176,196	2·67d.
1915-16	...	...	...	...	146,905	3·35d.
1916-17	...	...	...	...	161,674	3·40d.
1917-18	...	...	...	...	130,664	2·53d.
1918-19	...	...	...	...	125,196	4·87d.
1919-20	...	...	...	...	138,310	6·90d.

This apparently large increase in cost is attributable to increased price of materials, wages, &c., and also this year 5 per cent. has been allowed on cost of dredges for depreciation.