

Office.—The total expenditure of all kinds which passed through the books was £212,582. Of this amount the sum of £73,295, in payment of wages, &c., was paid out of Thames and Whakatane Imprest Accounts. Payments through the Auckland branch of the Treasury amounted to £90,133. The number of piecework contracts let during the year amounted to 324. The number of vouchers passed through the books was 4,229. The total amount of revenue received during the year (apart from rates) was £2,823 0s. 2d., the principal item being Patetonga tram freights, £621 17s. 2d. Inward correspondence numbered 8,980, outward 13,440.

Collection of Rates.—The total amount received during the year was £11,138, apportioned as follows: Hauraki Plains, £7,698; Rangitaiki Swamp, £3,440. A reclassification of the Hauraki Plains area was made early in the year, and the 1923-24 rates were based thereon. Very few objections to this were received, thus showing the soundness of the new classification. By an amendment of the Act provision has been made for a reclassification of the Rangitaiki area. The total number of assessments made for the year 1923-24 was 1,461.

Draughting Staff.—During the year the draughting staff have been kept very busy. The great amount of field surveying, mainly in the Rangitaiki district, has occasioned much plan-work, computations, general searching, and the supply of considerable survey data. Valuable 40-chain plots of the Rukuhia and Ruakura portions of the Hamilton Swamp areas have been made. In addition to this much work was done in the preparation of Proclamation plans and the drawing-up of any necessary agreements and other small matters incidental to the proclamation of land transactions under the different statutes.

On the engineering side the staff has spent considerable time on the checking of various designs, and on the designing of spillways, culverts, weirs, drains, &c. The lithograph maps of the various districts have been kept up to date, and a new map for the Rangitaiki district has been prepared. The photostat has been in great demand for the reproduction of plans for survey information, &c. Approximately 3,500 prints have been made during the year, showing a great saving in labour and cost.

The annual reports upon Hauraki Plains, Rangitaiki Plains, and swamp-drainage works not referred to herein will be found in separate parliamentary papers.

APPENDIX IV.—SAND-DUNE RECLAMATION.

(H. J. LOWE, Commissioner of Crown Lands, North Auckland.)

DURING the year sand-dune reclamation has been carried on in three different localities—viz., on the east coast, between Waipu and Marsden Point; on the west coast, between South Kaipara Head and Motutara; in the far north, between Waipapakauri and Hohoura. Work previously commenced on the Northern Kaipara area, at the back of Te Kopuru, was not proceeded with further, though reports show that the lupin plantations previously established are progressing favourably.

The expenditure on the various areas to date is as follows: Waipu, £2,345 11s. 4d.; Kaipara, £2,432 9s. 2d.; Great Northern, £508 0s. 9d.; Northern Wairoa, £268 6s. 6d.

I attach herewith a report on the work, by Mr. S. Stafford, Overseer in charge of the operations. These works must be classed more in the nature of an experiment, and if the work done is to be protected and proceeded with the trespassing by cattle and the menace by fires will have to be dealt with. The Overseer is carrying out his work very satisfactorily with the means at our disposal, but depasturing on the areas affected should be absolutely prohibited, and some method evolved to deal with the fire menace.

SIR,—

I have the honour to submit herewith the fifth annual report of the reclamation of the sand-dune areas.

Operations were commenced in the various localities at the following dates: Waipu, 11th August, 1919; Kaipara, 10th March, 1920; Ruakaka, 21st June, 1920; Northern Wairoa, 2nd May, 1921. The areas were inspected as follows: Waiuku (south of Auckland), 9th November, 1921; Ocean Beach, Whangarei Heads, 15th November, 1921; Waipapakauri and Hohoura, 15th March, 1922.

Reclamation operations commenced at the Great Northern (Waipapakauri to Hohoura), September, 1921, by sowing 2 cwt. of California tree-lupin seed, between Corcoran's land (inland drift) and Stony Crossing, in the vicinity of the "Big Flat," and on 23rd May, 1922, 10 cwt. 3 qr. 23 lb. of California tree-lupin seed was sown, principally on coastal dune areas, and 103 sacks of marram-grass plants were planted out.