

The following is a summary of the main features of the year's work :—

DREDGES.

Two useful additions to the dredging plant have been made during the year.

A Kingston grab-dredge commenced operations in June, and a large steam dipper-dredge has recently commenced work. A second plant of similar type will shortly be put in commission. All these dredges have been assembled at Kerepechi on pontoons constructed on the works.

The dredges excavated 508,654 cubic yards during the year, at average cost of 7·27d. per cubic yard.

No. 1 Priestman dredge has been working in the Waitoa River, where channel-silting is extremely troublesome. The quantity excavated was 29,250 cubic yards, at cost of 11·24d. per cubic yard. This dredge has been working continuously for a period of over fifteen years, and is now being dismantled for extensive renewals and repairs to the machinery, and the pontoon will have to be docked as soon as a slipway can be constructed at Kerepechi.

No. 2 Priestman dredge is on the Maukoro Canal, and is now 3 miles 60 chains from the Waitakaruru road-bridge. The machinery of this dredge has been overhauled and improved by substituting grooved-friction for the original smooth-friction drive.

Electric light has also been installed, and the plant is now working two shifts. The hand-dug drains on the canal route have been deepened with the object of consolidating the land ahead of the dredge, where the peat is from 13 ft. to 25 ft. deep. This dredge excavated 36,652 cubic yards, at an average cost of 9·11d. per cubic yard.

No. 6 Priestman dredge has been operating in the Piako River between Kerepechi and Ngatea. This dredge has also been remodelled and equipped with grooved-friction drive, and is now a very efficient plant. The output was 47,100 cubic yards, at cost of 6·71d. per cubic yard.

No. 11 Kingston dredge is a recent addition to the plant, and was assembled in the local yards on a substantial pontoon built last year at Kerepechi. It is doing excellent work in the Piako River, and the effect of the river-improvement works is apparent in the lowering of the low-water level at Kerepechi. The output for ten months was 70,074 cubic yards, at the cost of 6·07d. per cubic yard.

No. 15 Bucyrus drag-line has been constructing stop-banks and roads on the Kerepechi Block, and also widening the Awaitei Canal. This dredge handled 104,810 cubic yards of spoil, at a cost of 5·2d. per cubic yard.

No. 16 Bucyrus drag-line has been widening the Puhanga Canal, and having completed the work on the eastern bank is now removing the old stop-bank road preparatory to widening the western side of the canal. Two shifts are being worked, and a half-yard bucket is being used with extended boom. The quantity excavated was 105,980 cubic yards, and the cost 7·50d. per cubic yard.

No. 19 Michigan walking-dredge has been constructing road-drains on the Kerepechi Block, and is now excavating a large collecting-ditch parallel to the Awaitei Canal. Good progress was made in dry country, but flood-water made operations difficult during the winter. This dredge excavated 40,733 cubic yards, at 10·11d. per cubic yard.

No. 20 Rood land-dredge has commenced work on a block of land lying to the south of the Kerepechi Block, and between the Awaitei Canal and the Piako River, known locally as the Awaitei Block. This machine handled 74,053 cubic yards, at 7·37d. per cubic yard.

No. 23 American steel dipper-dredge is a further addition to the plant recently erected at Kerepechi, and has commenced work in the Awaitei Canal extension. This is a large steam-dredge equipped with a one-and-a-half-yard dipper, and as the operators gain experience will prove an efficient digger.

The following table shows the amount of spoil dredged and machine-excavated and cost per cubic yard for the past ten years :—

Year.	Cubic Yards.	Cost per Cubic Yard.	Year.	Cubic Yards.	Cost per Cubic Yard.
1914-15 ..	176,196	2·67d.	1919-20 ..	138,310	6·90d.
1915-16 ..	146,905	3·35d.	1920-21 ..	158,865	7·42d.
1916-17 ..	161,674	3·40d.	1921-22 ..	246,022	7·29d.
1917-18 ..	130,664	2·53d.	1922-23 ..	440,092	8·20d.
1918-19 ..	125,196	4·87d.	1923-24 ..	508,654	7·27d.

CENTRAL DISTRICT.

In this district several miles of road-formation have been completed, principally on the Kerepechi Block, where the roads are formed from spoil of the machine-dug drains. The Puhanga Canal Stop-bank Road has been formed on the east side, and the Ngaurua Canal Stop-bank Road raised to finished level and formed. The Kaikahu and Pekapeka and some Kerepechi Township roads have also been formed. A three-foot-gauge tramway has been laid for a distance of 4 miles 43 chains on the formation of the Puhanga-Torehape Road, and 18,190 fascines laid, and 2,270 cubic yards of clay have been carted on to this road. Repairs were effected to the Ngatea West Road. The metalling of the Orchard East and River-bank Road between Ngatea and Paul's Wharf was completed, 1,194 cubic yards of metal being used; and 3,650 cubic yards of metal were spread on the Kerepechi-Kaihere Road; 900 cubic yards of metal were also used in completing the remetalling of the Ngatea East and Kerepechi-Kopuarahi Roads. A new road is being constructed on the western bank of the Puhanga Canal, and a large collecting-ditch constructed parallel to the canal and discharging into a large two-barrel concrete flood-gate on the Piako River. A new permanent bridge, 107 ft. span, and also a temporary bridge have been built across the Puhanga Canal, and three small road-bridges and several culverts and flood-gates completed in this locality.

A large amount of ditch-construction has been carried out, and also all outlet drains cleaned, and many widened and deepened. At a poll recently taken, the ratepayers of the Horahia-Opou Special Drainage District sanctioned a loan of £1,450 for drainage-improvement works, which are being carried