

A scheme of drainage was then drawn up, but it was considered that the cost was too high to warrant complete development of the swamp at the present time. It was recommended that the settlers could get a profitable flax crop by putting in small surface drains through their individual holdings. At the same time the ground would be gradually consolidating and becoming more suitable for development when the time came for operation of the major scheme. Expenditure for the year was £253 1s. 4d.

Kerikeri Block Surveys.—These surveys were undertaken with a view to determining the expenditure necessary in drainage and roading to open for settlement the Crown Block of 6,400 acres situated in Blocks XI and XII, Kerikeri Survey District, and II and III, Kawakawa Survey District. The survey has been in progress for two months, and is now well advanced. The block comprises about 5,500 acres of average gum-land country, undulating to hilly and broken; about 600 acres of fair peat swamp; and 300 acres of rocky volcanic flat. Roading will prove a heavy burden on the block, as altogether thirteen miles of road is required, mainly through bad roading country. The drainage of the swamp will also prove very costly, as a tunnelled outfall 550 ft. in length through a clay hill is necessary. Altogether, it seems doubtful if the block can at the present time bear the expenditure necessary to open it for settlement. Expenditure was £50 13s.

Hereford Park Water-supply.—The past year has been a most unsatisfactory one as regards the Hereford Park water-supply, the source of all the trouble being the ram itself, parts of which were constantly breaking. However, towards the latter end of the period the Department purchased a Blake ram, which will be installed at an early date. The pipe-lines and tanks are in good order. Expenditure was £9 9s. 8d.

Waiare Water-supply.—Considerable difficulty was experienced in laying the drive-pipe for this installation in the bed of the stream. The extreme coldness of the water prevented continuous work being carried on, and the everlasting danger of the waterfall also militated against the early completion of the job. A trial was finally made about the end of September, but no good results could be obtained, the "kick" of the ram being so great that it loosened the flanges on the pipe and caused an air-leak. After considerable trouble these leaks were blocked, and ram has been pumping since November, 1924, approximately 1,500 gallons per diem. An increased supply could be obtained were the drive-water to be turned on to full pressure, but unless stronger drive-pipes with flanged ends were installed the danger of air-leaks would be greatly increased. The expenditure recorded was £157 7s. 1d.

Omeheu Water-supply.—At the request of the settlers in the Omeheu Soldiers Settlement a scheme for a water-supply by pumping from the Rangitaiki River was put in hand by the Department. This entailed the erection of a 6,000-gallon elevated reservoir with windmills, and also an auxiliary engine and pump, for use when required. A total length of 101 chains of main pipe-line was laid, and from this the individual settlers have run 16 heads. The plant has given every satisfaction, and each section is assured an ample supply of good water. The work was completed during the past year. Expenditure for the twelve months was £182 12s. 11d.

The following particulars give the aggregate of the principal operations carried out over all the works under the direction of the branch:—

	Miles	ch.		Number.
Cleaning drains	356	49	Box culverts built	5
Widening and deepening drains	86	26	Pile bridges erected	13
Constructing new drains	20	12	Sill bridges erected	13
Dredge cuts	42	73	Concrete bridges erected	1
Re-forming roads	6	55	Piles and protective work	1,479
Forming new roads	10	63		Bundles.
Metalling roads	2	7	Fascines used	1,322
Fencing roads	4	0		Cub. yd.
Tram-lines laid	1	40	Metal used (for roads)	3,963
New stop-banks	1	0	Clay used (for roads)	17,121
Repairs to stop-banks	21	0	Spoil excavated by floating and	
Levels taken	403	35	dry-land excavators	1,885,690
Traverses run	56	10	Rock-excavation	39,238
Line-cutting	56	20	Stiff clay and rubble excavation	12,974
		Number.	Scoop excavation	7,950
Peat soundings		1,786		Acres.
Concrete dam built		1	Ploughing	54
Flood-gates built		15	Sowing	87
Concrete culverts built		4	Cultivating	32

Office. The total expenditure of all kinds which passed through the books was £235,443. Of this amount the sum of £67,010 in payment of wages was paid out of Thames and Whakatane Imprest Accounts. Payments through the Auckland branch of the Treasury amounted to £70,903. The number of piecework contracts let during the year was 267, and the number of vouchers passed 4,279. The total amount of miscellaneous revenue received during the year was £3,133 6s. 2d., the principal item being Patetonga tram freights, £822. Inward correspondence numbered 7,566, outward 10,890.

Collection of Rates.—The total amount received during the year was £3,853, credited as follows: Hauraki Plains, £2,650; Rangitaiki Swamp, £1,203. The total number of assessments made for the year 1924–25 was 1,375. A reclassification of the Rangitaiki area was made during the year, the land being now divided into four classes, instead of three as in previous classification. Owing to various causes, but principally the financial slump and the high prices paid for the land, the Rangitaiki area is not at present in a good financial condition, as is evidenced by the small total of the rates collected.