

1931.  
NEW ZEALAND.

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DEPARTMENT OF LANDS AND SURVEY.

# DRAINAGE OPERATIONS IN HAURAKI PLAINS.

REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH, 1931, TOGETHER WITH STATEMENT  
OF ACCOUNTS.

*Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly pursuant to Section 20 of the Hauraki Plains Act, 1926.*

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SIR,—

Department of Lands and Survey, Wellington, 1st July, 1931.

I have the honour to present herewith the report of the Chief Drainage Engineer on operations carried out during the past year on the Hauraki Plains in accordance with the provisions of the Hauraki Plains Act, 1926.

I have, &c.,

W. ROBERTSON,

The Hon. E. A. Ransom, Minister of Lands.

Under-Secretary for Lands.

## REPORT OF CHIEF DRAINAGE ENGINEER.

SIR,—

I beg to submit the twenty-third annual report on the Hauraki Plains works for the financial year ending 31st March, 1931.

This reclamation scheme has now reached an advanced stage of progress, and in view of the widespread interest in the economic aspect of rural-land development at the present time a brief review is opportune of production accomplishments and the future possibilities of the Hauraki Plains.

The area deriving benefits from the works carried out under the scheme is approximately 163,000 acres, comprising 90,500 acres of Crown land and 72,500 acres of freehold and Native land. The benefits conferred by our works vary in both degree and kind. Practically all the Crown land and a large portion of the freehold was originally morass, with no production capacity until reclaimed. The reclamation scheme was commenced in 1907, and the first block of Crown land offered for selection, in 1910, comprised 16,300 acres, subdivided into 104 sections.

The following is a general classification of the Crown land according to present conditions and future possibilities :—

	Acres.
Crown land disposed of as farms .. .. .	45,200
Crown land now being drained and roaded .. .. .	15,100
Crown land unsuitable for rural settlement .. .. .	30,200
	90,500

For some years the reclaimed land was used principally for fattening stock; but dairy-farming commenced in 1911 and rapidly became the main industry. Efforts have been made each year to record the value of the principal dairying and pastoral products, and the aggregate is now over £5,000,000. As it is impossible to get complete returns from a large district, the actual value exceeds this figure, and it does not include the very considerable value of the increased production from a large area which is directly due to the improved drainage conditions brought about by the operations of the Department. Though there can be no doubt that the development of new country, and more especially the creation of a high permanent productive capacity from waste land, is a matter of national importance, it is, however, very difficult to assess the return the Dominion receives from the application of capital expenditure to real productive work of this nature. General benefits, such as increased prosperity, more direct means of communication between districts, and the creation of more healthy local conditions, though obvious, cannot be expressed in monetary values.