

CENTRAL DISTRICT.

The principal activities in this district comprised river-improvement work, road-metalling, and drain-construction. A scheme for metalling 3 miles 57 chains of roads in the Kerepeehi Block, commenced in October, 1929, was completed in February, 1931, winter conditions having necessitated cessation of the work during the period June to October (inclusive). During the year formation was completed, and base-course metal was laid for a distance of 63 chains and surface course completed on 3 miles 57 chains of roadway. The total quantity of metal used was 4,856 cubic yards, which was delivered by scow to various points on the river-bank and carted on to the roads by motor-lorry and horse teams. The Hopai West Road was metalled for a distance of 71 chains, using 1,768 cubic yards of metal. Between thirty and forty men accommodated in relief works camp at Kaihere were engaged on drain-construction on the Kerepeehi Block until July, when the camp was closed and some of the men moved to a new camp established at Waitakaruru. A total of 4 miles 2 chains of new drains were constructed in the Central District, and 1 mile 73 chains of drains widened and deepened by manual labour, the quantity of excavation being 19,320 cubic yards. 15 miles 4 chains of drains were cleaned. The reconditioning of 5 miles 75 chains of drain by drag-line excavator necessitated excavation amounting to 28,329 cubic yards.

At the central depot at Kerepeehi stores, fuel, and supplies are received and distributed by barge, launch, or motor-lorry.

Minor undertakings include ring-barking willows on the stream-banks; spraying and grubbing blackberries on flax plantations; planting 1,040 trees; cutting and hauling 323 white-pine logs for earthwork timbering and temporary construction; fencing stop-banks; and levelling, cultivating, and sowing grass-seed on spoil-banks. The vehicular river-ferry service at Kaihere has been maintained without interruption. One 4-ft.-diameter concrete culvert was constructed on the Ngatea-Waitakaruru Road.

WAITAKARURU-TOREHAPE DISTRICTS.

As the result of efforts to reduce unemployment, a considerable volume of useful development work has been accomplished in the unsettled portions of these districts. A camp to accommodate about fifty workmen, established at Torehape in October, 1929, was maintained until June, 1930, when about thirty-five men were transferred to a new camp at Waitakaruru. 15 miles 13 chains of new drains were constructed during the year, and 19 miles 2 chains of existing drains reconditioned. These works, which were carried out under a system of co-operative contracts, involved 70,335 cubic yards of excavation. General maintenance work was carried out, and 30 miles 42 chains of drains were cleaned. Improvement of the Mangatarata Stream, consisting of the enlargement of the channel and removal of growth and obstructions, was carried out for a distance of 27 chains for the purpose of preventing the flooding of a low portion of the Torehape-Mangatarata Road. Between July and October 4,122 cubic yards of clay ballast was carted by tramway on to the Torehape Road, and 540 black-birch sleepers were cut and used for repairing tramway.

AWAITI DISTRICT.

For some time past work connected with the Elstow-Awaiti drainage scheme has comprised the bulk of the yearly construction in this district. This scheme, which is now nearly completed, involved approximately 1,050,000 cubic yards of excavation in the construction of 12 miles of canals, over 17 miles of stop-banks, and 18½ miles of drains. It also includes 15 miles of road-construction, and the building of five road-bridges and eleven large flood-gates. During the year under review the stop-banks on the northern side of the Intercepting Canal have been completed, and the stop-banks of both sides of the Awaiti Canal have been raised to required level, with the exception of two sections, each about 6 chains in length—one on the right bank of the canal where subsidence of 1 ft. to 2 ft. has taken place, and the other comprising two openings in the left bank which it is not advisable to close until the temporary dams in the canal are removed. Nearly all the drain-construction included in this scheme is now completed. A large drain connecting the upper end of the Elstow Canal with the outlet of the Elstow Drainage Board's Central Area system at the Tirohia-Otway Road was completed during the year, and also 1 mile 44 chains of road-formation. A total quantity of 19,618 cubic yards of material was excavated by manual labour in the construction of 48 chains of new drain, widening and deepening 5 miles 23 chains of existing drains, and strengthening 52 chains of light stop-bank. Roading and drainage for the development of the Koromatua Block, comprising about 935 acres of peat land adjoining the Otway Settlement, in the Elstow district, was commenced in December, and at the end of the financial year 9,285 cubic yards had been excavated by co-operative contractors in the construction of 2 miles 25 chains of new drains of various sizes, and 2,998 cubic yards of clay ballast was carted by the Department's teams for the formation of 133 chains of road on peat subgrade. The construction of two road-culverts, one 18-ft.-stringer access bridge, and 10 chains of fencing are additional works carried out on this block. In the Awaiti district 44 chains of fencing was erected for the protection of drains and stop-banks, thirteen pipe road-culverts varying in diameter from 2 ft. 6 in. to 5 ft., two two-barrel flood-gates, and one small road-bridge were constructed. 30 chains of drain was cleaned.