

HIKURANGI DRAINAGE AREA (50,000 ACRES), WHANGAREI COUNTY.

Rainfall.—The rain throughout the year has again been well in excess, both in quantity and in intensity, of that usually experienced. The year's total recorded at the Apotu Camp gauge being 81·27 in.

In common with the remainder of the Northern Peninsula, some severe floods have occurred in this area. In June the Jordan stage showed an elevation of 34·1 ft., and early in February the stage reached was 38·4 ft., the latter being the greatest for forty years. On this latter occasion rain was so intense that as much as 15 in. fell in some twenty hours on the 1st February.

Construction Work.—No developmental construction work, either by power excavator or by hand labour, has been carried out through the year.

Plant and Machinery, &c.—All plant and machinery is stored at the Apotu Camp. During the year certain items have been sold or transferred to other works under the control of this Department.

Relief Works.—No relief workers in the area have been directly under departmental control. A small gang has worked on a creek outlet near Hikurangi Mountain, but these men are on the rationed No. 5 scheme from Hikurangi.

Departmental Records.—All stores and office records have been kept up to date.

Maintenance.—Through the year ordinary maintenance was carried out on the hand-dug outlets of the area and also, where required, on the Ngararatunua Canal.

General.—The disastrous floods through the past two years, culminating in the peak visitation of early February, have resulted in the settlers petitioning that thorough investigation be made into the possibility of lessening the flood-menace by the completion of further developmental work. This investigation will take the form of a joint report compiled by the District Engineer at Whangarei and myself.

Works Expenditure.—The expenditure for the year was £989 3s. 8d.

WAIHI DRAINAGE AREA (20,000 ACRES), TAURANGA COUNTY.

The drainage outlets and stop-banks in this area were again maintained by the Department, improvements being carried out where desirable. The total length of drains maintained annually is 37 m. 73 ch., and contracts were advertised for this work. An additional length of 15 m. of canal and stream is maintained periodically as required. The foreshore and lower lengths of the canals were stop-banked as the canals were constructed, and seven flood-gates were placed under these banks. These works are also maintained by the Department.

The flax company, which leases the major portion of the unsettled swamp area in the district, recommenced milling during the year. There appears to be an ample supply of good millable flax on the area being worked.

Development work was proceeded with by the Department on the areas of surrendered flax-leaf west of the Wharere Canal, the total area grassed to date being 550 acres. Dairying was carried out on these fully equipped sections, and a further four sections were in course of preparation for dairying next season. Bullocks were grazed on this area to assist consolidation, and a small flock of sheep were run to control ragwort.

The expenditure for the year was £637 5s. 3d.

Drainage rates struck totalled £1,683 9s. 3d., whilst £481 17s. 10d. was collected.

POUKAWA DRAINAGE AREA (15,567 ACRES), HAWKE'S BAY.

The only work carried out during the year was the maintenance of the outlets. There has been considerable difficulty in obtaining suitable labour, and it appears to me that the control of this area should be taken over by the local office.

The expenditure for the year was £249 17s.

Rates struck amounted to £1,121 1s. 5d. (capital only), whilst £746 16s. 10d. was collected by the District Office at Napier.

I have, &c.,

R. G. MACMORRAN,

Chief Drainage Engineer.

The Under-Secretary for Lands, Wellington.