

1941.
NEW ZEALAND.

RIVER-CONTROL COMMITTEE

(REPORTS OF THE).
(MR. J. O'BRIEN, CHAIRMAN.)

Laid on the Table of the House of Representatives.

ORDERS OF REFERENCE.

Extracts from the Journals of the House of Representatives.

THURSDAY, THE 27TH DAY OF MARCH, 1941.

Ordered, "That a Select Committee be appointed, consisting of seven members, to inquire into and report upon such questions relating to the protection of property from damage by floods and erosion and to the control of rivers generally as may be referred to it by the House or the Government: the Committee to have power to sit during the adjournment of the House and to consist of Mr. Cullen, Mr. Goosman, Mr. Harker, Mr. Kyle, Mr. Lowry, Mr. O'Brien, and the Mover."—(Hon. Mr. ARMSTRONG.)

THURSDAY, THE 4TH DAY OF SEPTEMBER, 1941.

Ordered, "That the Soil Conservation and Rivers Control Bill be referred to the River-control Committee, and that, for the purpose of considering the Bill, the Committee have leave to sit on days on which the House is not sitting."—(Hon. Mr. ARMSTRONG.)

REPORTS.

To the Hon. the ACTING PRIME MINISTER.

THE Select Committee set up by Order of the House on the 27th March, 1941, to inquire into and report upon such questions relating to the protection of property from damage by floods and erosion and to the control of rivers generally as might be referred to it by the House or the Government, commenced its sittings on the 29th April, 1941.

Certain proposals forming the basis for a scheme for the protection of property from damage by floods and erosion, which had been drafted by the Public Works Department in consultation with other interested Departments of State, were referred by the Government to the Committee.

It was made clear that the Committee was not in any way bound by, or restricted to, these proposals, and they were taken, therefore, as the basis of a general inquiry into the problems of river-control, flooding, and soil-erosion.

These problems are not new, and the development of efforts to cope with them may be briefly reviewed.

The Public Works Department has been concerned with the question of flood-control almost since the Department's inception. Originally, flood-control work was undertaken almost solely for the purpose of protecting engineering structures, such as bridges, from damage by flood-waters. Then channel improvement to give quicker discharge for flood-waters was undertaken, followed by the building of stop-banks to prevent flood-waters spreading over valuable land, and finally, complete control schemes were undertaken by the Department.

The first major flood-control scheme undertaken by the Department was that for the Waihou and Ohinemuri Rivers, which was commenced about 1912. This scheme cost about £750,000, and was primarily designed to prevent the deposition of mining tailings on farm land, but it also gave complete