

1947

NEW ZEALAND

DEPARTMENT OF LANDS AND SURVEY

Drainage Operations in Hauraki Plains

REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH, 1947

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

Department of Lands and Survey, Wellington, 30th June, 1947.

SIR,—

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.,

D. M. GREIG,

Under-Secretary for Lands.

The Hon. the Minister of Lands.

REPORT OF CHIEF DRAINAGE ENGINEER

SIR,—

I have the honour to submit the thirty-ninth annual report on drainage and land-devolpment operations carried out on the Hauraki Plains. The report covers the year ending 31st March, 1947.

It is pleasing to be able to record a good year from both the production and the climatic angle. The rainfall of 52.55 in. was well above the average and was very evenly distributed throughout the year.

The flax-mill established near Kerepeehi is still operating, and during the year 2,303 tons of green leaf were milled from natural and planted flax grown on Crown land. Flax royalties payable to the Crown amounted to £288.

Owing to shortage of labour, work on the Hauraki Plains has been restricted almost entirely to essential maintenance. The usual programme of drain-cleaning has been completed in each district and a small amount of the most essential widening and deepening has been carried out. Maintenance of buildings and plant, which are becoming very old, has been a heavy item this year.

As mentioned in previous reports, nearly all the main outlet drains and canals, and in particular those carrying upland water from the hills on the west of the plains, are in very bad state. Those that cross the peat areas must be deepened from time to time, and all of them are siting up badly. No work has been done on these drains for

many years, and with all the existing plant engaged on the more essential work of raising the stop-banks to prevent tidal overflow on the foreshore and the Piako River it will be many years yet before plant can be made available for this work. Efforts are being made to secure additional plant, but so far only one machine has been secured from the War Assets Realization Board, and this plant has to undergo extensive overhaul before it can commence work.

The four existing drag-line excavators have done good work throughout the year. Two of them have been employed raising stop-banks on the Piako River, one working on each side of the river, and between them they have completed 188 chains of stop-bank. One plant has been employed on the Waitakaruru Stream Canal, widening and deepening the stream and raising the stop-bank on the right bank, and 95 chains bank measurement have been completed. The remaining machine has continued working on the removal of *Poa aquatica* and improvement of the channel in the Awaiti Canal, 555 chains bank measurement being completed during the year.

Another useful machine is the D 4 caterpillar tractor, which has been fitted with bulldozer blade and hyster winch. For most of the year this machine was loaned to the Rangitaiki district, but was used in the Hauraki Plains district for about a month bulldozing the stop-bank ahead of the drag-line on the Waitakaruru Stream Canal, and for ten days harrowing and stumping on Thompson's farm. It is now being used to assist with the excavation for the new flood pumping-station being erected for the Thames Valley Drainage Board in Awaiti South. This pump station is being constructed near the Awaiti South Road in Block XV, Waihou Survey District, and is to discharge into the Tee Canal. It is to serve an area of 1,200 acres of low lying land on the right bank of the Awaiti Canal. When completed it will have two 5,500 gallon per minute automatically operated, electrically driven, flood pumps. Excavation work for the suction bay started in the middle of March, and at the end of the month satisfactory progress had been made. The drain-excavation work will be carried out by an RB 10 drag-line excavator owned by the Thames Valley Drainage Board.

On the land-development blocks within the Hauraki Plains area most of the work this year has been confined to essential maintenance of pastures, fences, and drains, general care of the 3,000 cattle and 6,000 sheep grazing on the areas, and control of noxious weeds and swamp growth. Some small progress has, however, been made with further development work, and the properties are showing remarkable improvement in general appearance due to the extra labour available for their maintenance.

The ferry service across the Piako River was continued during the year. The ferry punt was docked for inspection and repair during the Christmas school holiday period. The inspection revealed that this old punt is now very badly deteriorated. Rotting of the timbers has proceeded so far that further patching will not be possible, and a new punt must be procured at an early date if this service to the public is to be continued.

The drainage pumping-station on the Kerepehi Block was required to operate for 327½ hours during the year to remove water accumulated on the stop-banked portion of the Kerepehi Block during high levels of the Piako River.

The maintenance staff of fitters, mechanics, and carpenters has had a very busy year with repairs and maintenance to all classes of plant, machinery, buildings, flood-gates, &c.

The principal works carried out on the Hauraki Plains during the year are listed hereunder :—

	Length. Miles. Ch.	Excavation. Cubic Yd.
Drains cleaned by manual labour	112 29	..
Drains widened and deepened by manual labour	45 12	..
Canals widened and deepened by machine	1 18	30,777
Drains widened and deepened by machine	0 49	1,437
Canals cleaned of aquatic growth by machine	6 75	..
	Acres.	
Total area harrowed with tractor	700	

Other work has included the renewal of two road bridges, construction and erection of twelve single men's huts, maintenance of all plant, machinery, buildings, flood-gates, pumping-station, water-supply installations, roads (including regrading and remetalling), attention to noxious weeds, and general care of pastures and live-stock.

EXPENDITURE AND RATES

Maintenance expenditure for the year amounted to £3,233, rates struck amounted to £3,366, and collections, including arrears, totalled £3,515.

Net expenditure on construction work amounted to £3,796.

The amount shown as expenditure on maintenance may be subject to slight variation on completion of accounts.

I have, &c.,

E. TAYLOR,

Chief Drainage Engineer.

The Under-Secretary for Lands, Wellington.

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

A statement of accounts is published in parliamentary paper B.-1 [Pt. IV].

Approximate Cost of Paper.—Preparation, not given; printing (533 copies), £5 15s.

By Authority: E. V. PAUL, Government Printer, Wellington.—1947.

Price 3d.]

