

1909.
NEW ZEALAND.

DRAINAGE OPERATIONS IN HAURAKI PLAINS:

REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH, 1909, TOGETHER WITH
STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly pursuant to Section 10 of "The Hauraki Plains Act, 1908."

SIR,—

Department of Lands, Wellington, 7th June, 1909.

In accordance with the provisions of "The Hauraki Plains Act, 1908," I beg to forward you the attached report upon the drainage operations carried out under my supervision during the year ended 31st March, 1909. A statement of accounts for the year is also appended.

I have, &c.

WM. C. KENSINGTON,
Under-Secretary.

The Right Hon. Sir Joseph G. Ward, P.C., K.C.M.G.

REPORT.

IN accordance with the provisions of "The Hauraki Plains Act, 1908," I beg to report that the year ending 31st March, 1909, has been fruitful in very good results from the operations of the drainage-works. The Engineer's report, which is inserted below, gives the details of the work carried out. It has resulted in completely establishing the fact that nearly the whole 90,000 acres will be eventually made fit for settlement. It is also evident that the principal cause of the submergence of a large area of the plains was due to the fact that under the existing circumstances (before drainage-works were started) the Piako and Waitakaruru Rivers were incapable of discharging the waters forced upon them. The first important undertaking was the removal of the willows obstructing the current, the clearing out of snags, and the removal of the numberless sunken logs. This was carried out from the mouth to the junction with the Waitoa; also several tongues of land impeding the flow of the river have been removed by the Priestman dredges. The Awaiti River has been widened and deepened by the dredges for a considerable distance. The consequence has been that the rivers have now been able to receive and discharge all flood-waters without the adjoining lands, as heretofore, being submerged. Lands which in previous floods would have been covered by flood-waters to a depth of 3 ft. are now unaffected by the rains, and remain dry. The drainage operations proper have also gone hand-in-hand with the river-clearing operations, and up to the 31st March 127 miles of drains have been constructed.

The principal works now in progress are the deepening of the drains; the erection of stop-banks in the lower Piako River to prevent spring tides and a flood combined from overflowing the land made dry by the drains. The two Priestman dredges specially imported will now be kept continuously at work—one at the end of the canal emptying into the Waitakaruru River, the channel of which the dredge has already straightened and deepened, and at whose mouth a township and suburban lots will be laid off; the other dredge will be kept at work at the Maukoro end of the canal—that is, some fifteen miles from the northern end; and the two dredges will gradually advance towards each other.

The other important works started are the fixing and laying-off of the main road-lines which will intersect the whole area, and the actual formation of these roads in readiness for settlement.