

Plant and Machinery.

Bucyrus Plant.—The Bucyrus plant (Nos. 12, 13, and 14 excavators) have been engaged throughout the year as drag-lines on diversion work and river-improvement. The wear-and-tear on the plant has not been excessive, save perhaps for unavoidable travelling, and on buckets in grappling with timber and rock under water.

No. 26 Dipper.—The only work undertaken by this machine was in an attempt to construct the No. 10 diversion, which job, unfortunately, was far short of success, through the unstable nature of the country.

No. 3 Priestman.—This machine has been wholly on river-improvement work above Purua Bridge, and has had a hard year in grappling with massive timber, rock, and rubble.

Drilling and Compressor Plant.—This plant was used early in the period to complete the long D-B spillway; since then it has been overhauled thoroughly and later used on the rock-work of Nos. 7 and 6 diversions.

Locomotives, Trucks, &c.—These have not been used since the completion of the D-B spillway. The two Plymouth locomotives have been taken to Apotu and overhauled.

Truck and Cars.—One 30 cwt. truck and two cars have been in constant use for the year.

Workshops.—These have been kept busy through the year, where many machine parts have been made and repaired.

Other Works.

Survey Work.—A complete engineering survey has been made of the Whakapara arm of the swamp, and of the Parker Lamb Block in the upper reaches of the Waiotu arm. Levels, cross-sections, &c., have been taken as required for fields of relief work.

Through the first three months of the year some forty relief workers were engaged on hand drainage. These men had to be put off in June. Early in December thirty new men were engaged, and of these sixteen still remain.

Proposals for coming Year.—Excavator work on river improvement and diversion and hand-work on Okarika Valley is proposed, and cleaning of subsidiary canals and drains will be necessary in the coming Autumn.

Works Expenditure.—The sum of £21,859 6s. 5d. was expended during the year, of which day labour absorbed £9,886 5s. 5d. Some twenty-four piecework and co-operative contracts were let, entailing an expenditure of £2,989 13s. 9d.

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

In addition to the usual maintenance and improvement of hand drains, maintenance dredging was carried out on the Kaikokopu and Wharere Canals, and this work was completed towards the end of the period. The programme of drain improvement and construction commenced during the previous year by relief labour was carried to completion.

Dredges.—Monighan No. 17 dredge was employed on redredging the lower Kaikokopu and the Wharere Canals. Some 1 mile 72 chains of the Kaikokopu Canal and 2 miles 12 chains of the Wharere Canal were redredged, and the spoil removed totalled 123,070 cubic yards.

Maintenance.—All hand drains in the area were cleaned during the year; also repairs carried out to stop-banks and flood-gates as required. The length of hand drains cleaned was 34 miles 17 chains. The lower end of the Wharere Canal for a distance of 1 mile 35 chains was cleared of all growth by hand.

Relief Works.—Relief workers were engaged in completing the programme of drain-construction work in the flax-lease area between the Pongakawa and Wharere Canal, and in constructing new drains in the Pukehina Block. The length of drain bordering the Upper Kaikokopu Stream was also completed. The total length of new drains constructed was 5 miles 23 chains in the Pukehina area, of a total yardage of 4,022 cubic yards, and 4 miles 72 chains in the Nos. 1, 2, and 3 flax leases, of a total yardage of 7,055 cubic yards. In addition, a total length of 2 miles 51 chains of drains in the Central Block and Upper Kaikokopu were widened and deepened, with a total of 7,650 cubic yards of spoil removed.

Flax-culture.—There is an increasing growth of flax reaching the millable stage on the Crown leasehold areas, but milling was not proceeded with during the year owing to the very low price of fibre. The drains constructed by the Department have been of great benefit, and with the good season experienced the low-lying areas have rapidly dried out and a certain amount of consolidation taken place. The subsoil of this country is of a porous nature, and, despite the small amount of freeboard available, there is no doubt that with adequate maintenance of internal drainage sufficient movement can be maintained in the ground-water to prevent the stagnation which is fatal to the healthy growth of flax.

Rates.—Rates struck totalled £2,505 19s. 3d., some eighty-nine rate demands being issued.

Rates collected amounted to £202 16s. 8d.

Works Expenditure.—The expenditure for the year was £4,116 2s. 1d., of which day labour absorbed £2,521 9s. and twenty-three piecework or co-operative contracts amounted to £702 4s.