

The rainfall at Kerepechi was 43.23 in. in 1931, and rain fell on 167 days. The rainfall records supplied by a voluntary observer show a fall at Kopuarahi of 44.97 in for the year. The winter and summer rainfall distribution during the last three years has been remarkably uniform on the plains, and this has had an important bearing on the production for these seasons. Rainfall records for Kerepechi covering a period of sixteen years are given below:—

RECORDS OF DAILY PRECIPITATION, KEREPECHI, HAURAKI PLAINS.

Year.	Number of Days, with given Daily Precipitation in Inches.											Total Days.	Total Fall.	Wettest Month.	Driest Month.				
	0.00 to 0.49.	0.50 to 0.74.	0.75 to 0.99.	1.00 to 1.24.	1.25 to 1.49.	1.50 to 1.74.	1.75 to 1.99.	2.00 to 2.49.	2.50 to 2.99.	3.00 to 3.99.	4.00 to 4.99.					5.00 to 5.99.	6.00 to 7.00.		
1916 ..	109	12	9	7	2	3	..	1	..	1	..	..	..	144	52.19	Nov.	6.65	Feb.	1.05
1917 ..	131	11	4	4	3	..	1	1	1	..	..	..	..	156	45.61	Feb.	6.26	Jan.	0.65
1918 ..	145	14	6	4	..	1	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	171	44.06	Oct.	7.47	May	2.24
1919 ..	122	9	1	3	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	137	27.36	July	4.52	Dec.	0.89
1920 ..	85	7	10	3	1	1	3	2	..	..	..	..	..	112	43.16	Feb.	6.10	July	1.73
1921 ..	93	12	5	3	2	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	116	34.41	Oct.	5.89	Feb.	0.72
1922 ..	101	17	9	3	..	1	1	..	1	..	..	..	..	133	42.81	Feb.	6.62	April	1.73
1923 ..	151	6	5	4	..	1	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	169	47.04	April	9.76	Mar.	1.72
1924 ..	132	8	10	5	2	5	1	1	..	2	..	..	..	166	60.37	April	8.55	July	1.87
1925 ..	142	15	4	2	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	164	37.64	June	6.67	April	0.84
1926 ..	149	15	6	4	5	2	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	183	55.53	May	8.86	Feb.	1.79
1927 ..	159	10	6	5	..	4	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	184	45.33	July	6.29	April	2.01
1928 ..	125	7	9	2	3	2	2	1	..	..	..	..	..	151	47.30	May	7.52	Jan.	0.01
1929 ..	124	19	8	3	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	155	41.05	April	5.09	Feb.	0.74
1930 ..	131	4	2	2	3	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	146	37.72	Jan.	6.87	Dec.	0.80
1931 ..	144	10	7	..	4	..	..	..	..	2	..	..	..	167	43.23	July	7.80	Mar.	0.98
1932* ..	2	1	2	1	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	25	8.00	Feb.	4.95	Jan.	1.37

\* First three months of year only.

Average annual rainfall over sixteen years is 44.05.

A land ballot was held in December for six sections in the Awaitei district, which attracted over two hundred applicants. A considerable amount of permanent improvement has already been carried out by the successful selectors, and next season these new farms should be entering the stage of actual production.

An area of 1,600 acres adjoining the Kerepechi Block has reached the stage of development when it could be offered for selection as soon as a pumping-station is provided. The early installation of a special low-lift land-drainage pump is necessary for the protection of this area, and also the occupied portion of the Kerepechi Block, which would be seriously affected if high stage of the Piako River prevented gravity drainage for many days.

The dry summer produced the usual succession of destructive peat fires. Fires in the Kaihere district burnt about 300 acres of grassland and also 250 acres of planted flax. As a means of preventing and controlling fires, I have for many years urged that the peat areas of the Hauraki Plains should be constituted fire districts. The fire-district principle has for many years formed an important feature in the protection of forests, and similar protection is absolutely essential for the successful development of the peat lands for flax-production. The experience this year has shown conclusively that grassland is not free from the fire menace.

A review of activities of the past year shows a decrease in the volume of work accomplished by the departmental forces as compared with the years immediately preceding. Contraction of public works has become essential as a matter of national economy, and the expenditure from the Hauraki Plains Settlement Account has been scaled down to meet the times.

The problem of unemployment is, unfortunately, still compelling, and in the search for work that will employ large numbers of men and can be undertaken quickly land-reclamation offers a most fruitful field. For several years all available funds have been used by the Department for the carrying-out of work requiring hand labour and providing reproductive employment for the largest possible number of workers. The number of men accommodated in camps and engaged on unemployment relief works on the 31st March, 1932, was about eighty, and plans have been formulated for increasing this number during the financial year 1932-33, if funds are made available. One of the works undertaken to relieve the shortage of employment is the Miranda drainage scheme. This is being carried out by the Department for the Hauraki Plains County Council under an arrangement with the Unemployment Board, and the scheme will provide main drainage for 4,000 acres of rich littoral swamp near Waitakaruru. The main drainage-channel is 3 miles 37 chains long, varying in width from 32 ft. to 10 ft., and is being constructed entirely by manual labour. This work was commenced on the 24th November. Insufficient funds delayed progress during the first three months, but excellent progress is now being made.

Works carried out by this Branch outside of the Hauraki Plains area include the formation and metalling of 75 chains of road in the Wairakau Estate, near Te Aroha, and the formation of 35 chains of road in the Paritu Block.