

1944
NEW ZEALAND

DEPARTMENT OF LANDS AND SURVEY

RANGITAIKI LAND DRAINAGE

REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH, 1944

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly in pursuance of Section 10 of the Rangitaiki Land Drainage Act, 1910

Department of Lands and Survey, Wellington, 1st May, 1944.

SIR,—

I have the honour to submit herewith the report of the Chief Drainage Engineer on drainage operations on the Rangitaiki Plains for the year ended 31st March, 1944, pursuant to the provisions of the Rangitaiki Land Drainage Act, 1910.

I have, &c.,

R. G. MACMORRAN,

Under-Secretary for Lands.

The Hon. the Minister of Lands.

REPORT OF THE CHIEF DRAINAGE ENGINEER

SIR,—

In accordance with the requirements of the Rangitaiki Land Drainage Act, 1910, I have the honour to submit the following report on the work carried out during the year ended 31st March, 1944.

Heavy rainfall inland caused floods in the Whakatane and Rangitaiki Rivers at the end of February, 1944. An area of approximately 8,000 acres was affected, and this necessitated the removal of stock. Another flood occurred on the 17th March, when most of the water left by the previous flood had escaped and about 3,000 acres was again inundated. Floods occurring in the dairy season must result in considerable loss to the farmers, but the settlers generally accepted these trying conditions with characteristic fortitude, and pastures destroyed by flood-water have been resown with commendable determination to maintain farm production.

It is gratifying to be able to report that in spite of the loss of production caused by floods, the Rangitaiki Dairy Co., which handles a large portion of the dairy production of the district, manufactured 4,450 tons of butter between 1st April, 1943, and 31st March, 1944. The maximum seasonal production for this factory has been about 5,000 tons.

The rainfall recorded at Thornton during 1943 was 43.49 in., rain falling on 101 days. The wettest month was June, with a fall of 9.63 in., and the driest month March, when the total rainfall was 0.07 in.

All available labour has been employed on maintenance work, 121 miles 32 chains of drains being cleaned by manual labour and 15 miles 4 chains with weed-cutting launch. Two excavators have also been engaged on canal and drain maintenance throughout the year. Brief particulars of the work carried out by these machines are given below:—

No. 17 Monaghan Drag-line Excavator.—This machine has reconditioned the Omeheu Canal between its junction with the Awaitei Stream and the railway. Work on the lower 16 chains of this canal was completed this year after the machine had been transferred from the left to the right bank. From the junction of the Omeheu Canal the plant has worked a distance of 100 chains down-stream on the right bank of the Awaitei Stream, removing silt from the canal and placing the spoil on the stop-bank. A dense growth of willows had to be cleared ahead of the dredge, and the task of removing the stumps delayed the progress of the machine. The output for the year was approximately 57,000 cubic yards.

No. 30 Bay City Excavator has been engaged on a number of maintenance jobs. During April it deepened part of the Kapua Drain leading to a newly-constructed outlet into the Kopeopeo Canal. During May and June it was employed on stop-bank repairs and river-bank protection on the Rangitaiki River. In July and August it deepened the