

In addition to the above, 2,127 tons of flax was milled at the flaxmill, Kaihere.

From the above it is apparent that, despite the severe drought conditions experienced this year, production has been well maintained. This indicates the very great value of reclaimed swamp land.

The rainfall recorded at Kerepechi for the year was 31.68 in., compared with an average over the last thirty-nine years of 43.01 in. The wettest month was August, with 4.32 in. and the driest, February, with 0.21 in. The total fall for the four months November, December, January, and February was only 3.56 in.

The labour force employed on the Hauraki Plains has now grown to about sixty men. This number requires to be greatly increased if the urgent arrears of essential maintenance work are to be overtaken. Unfortunately, the number it is possible to employ is limited by the amount of accommodation available, which is restricted by the extreme shortage of all classes of building material. Men are now coming forward in increasing numbers, but accommodation is apt to present a serious problem in the future, particularly for the better class of tradesman, whom it is desired to keep permanently. To retain these men, married men's accommodation is essential.

During the year a start was made with the maintenance dredging of main canals, when No. 15 excavator commenced the work of removing accumulations of *Poa aquatica* and improving the channel in the Awaiti Canal. Stop-bank reconstruction work was also continued on the foreshore and along both banks of the Piako River and on the left bank of the Waihou River, where a total of 306 chains was completed.

Four drag-line excavators have been continuously employed throughout the year, and the following is a *résumé* of the work done by each machine :—

*No. 15 Bucyrus Excavator.*—This machine was engaged on reconstructing the Hauraki Gulf foreshore stop-banks. It completed to the Maukoro Canal and then moved to Pipiroa, where 45 chains of bank were completed on the west bank of the Piako River between Marshall's flood-gate (the starting-point for previous work) and No. 5 flood-gate, farther up-stream. The plant then returned to the depot for overhaul, cleaned out the Ferry Channel, the slipway, and several flood-gate outlets, and commenced work on removing *Poa aquatica* from the Awaiti Canal. In 66 working-days 128 chains of bank had been completed at a cost of £4 9s. 2d. per chain, and in 107 working-days 21,205 cubic yards of spoil were placed on the foreshore stop-banks at a cost of 9.7d. per cubic yard.

*No. 16 Bucyrus Excavator.*—This plant was engaged on the construction of the Maukoro Canal all the year. The left bank was completed from peg 3 mile 75 chains to peg 3 mile 11 chains. The spoil from excavation has been used for constructing roadways on both banks. In addition, this machine removed the piling from, and strengthened the dam in, the canal. In 201 working-days 34,027 cubic yards of material were excavated at a cost of 10.8d. per cubic yard.

*No. 29 Bay City Excavator.*—This machine has been employed on stop-bank reconstruction on the left bank of the Piako River. It completed the portion between Pipiroa flood-gate and the Pipiroa Ferry, where all spoil had to be carted by trucks, and the stretch between the ferry and No. 5 flood-gate which was constructed in one lift by borrowing from the river-side of the bank. The plant then moved up-stream and commenced work on the second lift of the portion between Pipiroa flood-gate and Hopai Road, which was also completed. After overhaul, the plant commenced the widening and deepening of the south side of Hopai Road drain, from which the spoil was carted by truck to the stop-banks. During the year 160 chains of stop-bank were completed and 26,866 cubic yards of spoil handled in 220 working-days at a cost of 11.12d. per cubic yard. A considerable amount of double handling and truck carting increased the unit cost.

*No. 31 Ruston Bucyrus Excavator.*—This excavator continued working south on the Orongo stop-bank until the main highway was reached at Kopu Bridge, and was then moved to the back of Sections 32s and 35s, where 27½ chains of stop-bank were reconstructed owing to erosion having caused bank-caving. Fifteen chains of the lower end of the Orongo boundary drain were widened and deepened before moving the plant to Kopuarahi to commence work on the Piako River stop-bank-improvement scheme,