

right bank, where, working northwards, the machine completed 34 chains of bank. During the year this plant handled 39,407 cubic yards of material in completing 101½ chains of stop-bank and 25 chains of drain improvement in 233 working-days at a cost of 8-05d. per cubic yard.

On the land-development blocks within the Hauraki Plains area work has, with one exception, been almost entirely confined to essential maintenance of pastures, fences, and main drains, attending to the 3,000 cattle and 5,000 sheep grazing on the areas, and controlling noxious weeds and swamp regrowth. Towards the end of the year, as more men became available, a start was made with the reconditioning of the main drains in these areas. The exception mentioned above is Section 35, Block XII, Piako Survey District, a section of 102 acres taken over by the Department for the rehabilitation of a returned serviceman. This area, which has been considerably improved, the house enlarged, and a new cow-shed erected, will be ready for a settler to commence milking at the beginning of the next dairy season.

An unforeseen and costly feature of the year under review was the disastrous peat fires experienced during the summer's long drought. These fires, which proved very difficult to control and necessitated the employment of many men for lengthy periods, caused extensive damage to fences and destroyed good pasture, which will be required to be resown.

The ferry service across the Piako River at Kaihere was continued during the year. The pontoon will be docked for inspection and repair in the near future, when it is hoped to make it serviceable for another year. This timber pontoon, which is showing signs of age and decay, will require to be replaced before long.

The pumping-station serving an area of 3,900 acres in the Kerepechi Block was required to operate for 155 hours during the year.

The principal works carried out on the Hauraki Plains during the year are listed in the following table:—

	Length. Miles. Ch.	Excavation. Cubic Yd.
Drains cleaned by manual labour	109 0	..
Drains and canals cleaned by weed-cutting launch	8 38	..
Drains widened and deepened by manual labour	2 0	5,950
Drains and canals improved by machines	1 76	38,027
Stop-banks reconstructed by machines	3 66	83,478
Canals cleaned by machine	1 16	..
	Acres.	
Area of swamp harrowed or rolled with tractor	565	

EXPENDITURE AND RATES

Maintenance expenditure for the year amounted to £3,069. Rates struck amounted to £3,417, and collections, including arrears, totalled £3,303.

Net expenditure on other works amounted to £3,548.

The amounts shown as expenditure on maintenance may be subject to slight variation on completion of accounts.

I have, &c.,

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The Under-Secretary for Lands, Wellington.

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

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