

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

Drain-maintenance work in this district is being seriously handicapped by the lack of plant available to overtake arrears of maintenance of the main outlet drains and canals. All three of the main canals—the Kaikokopu, the Wharere, and the Pongakawa—are silting up to a dangerous extent and bad flooding of neighbouring pasture land is certain to take place next winter.

The small R.B. 10 drag-line excavator purchased second-hand by the Department last year has been laid up for periods totalling nearly six months and has had to be extensively overhauled. Another plant which was to have been loaned to the district by the Public Works Department has not yet arrived, as it is undergoing repairs. Even with two plants operating continuously, it will be many years before arrears of maintenance are overtaken.

The R.B. 10 excavator has done good work since it has been overhauled and has completed the widening and deepening of the Waerenga Road Drain, excavating about 4,000 cubic yards from 50 chains of drain. It then widened and deepened the Kaikokopu Road Drain for 56 chains, removing 4,900 cubic yards of spoil; and in the middle of February it commenced work on the urgently needed reconditioning of the Wharere Canal. Accumulations of *Poa aquatica* and other weeds were removed from 70 chains of the canal, and then a start was made in removing the accumulated silt. By the end of March, 41 chains had been covered and 3,800 cubic yards excavated. A total of 14,700 cubic yards has been excavated during the year. This machine was also used in the construction of the suction bay for the new flood pumping-station erected near the junction of the Waerenga Road and the Wharere Canal. The suction bay and pump-house have been completed, but the pumps have yet to be installed and improvements made to inlet drains.

The manual work carried out in the Waihi Drainage Area for the year has comprised the usual annual cleaning of main drains. This year 26 miles 17 chains of drains were cleaned by men working on contract and 7 miles 42 chains by men working on wages.

Expenditure and Rates.—Expenditure on maintenance for the year amounted to £1,404.

Rates struck : Special, £765 ; general, £1,608.

Rates collected, including arrears : Special, £888 ; general, £1,428.

In this district the statutory period of six months and fourteen days during which rates may be paid without the imposition of 10 per cent. penalty does not expire until 7th August, 1947. Receipts up to 31st March, 1947, only are included in this report.

POUKAWA DRAINAGE AREA (15,567 ACRES), HAWKE'S BAY

Maintenance work at a cost of £429 was carried out during the year, and I am again indebted to the Commissioner of Crown Lands, Napier, for the preparation and inspection of drain-cleaning contracts and payments made to contractors.

Rates struck : Special, £999 ; general, £311.

Rates collected, including arrears : Special, £618 ; general, £192.

No progress has been made regarding Native rates in this area.

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

I have, &c.,

E. TAYLOR,

Chief Drainage Engineer.

The Under-Secretary for Lands, Wellington.

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

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