

A fifth excavator commenced work during the year. This was a medium-sized drag-line purchased second-hand last year from the War Assets Realization Board. The plant was not in very good order when purchased and had to be completely dismantled and reconditioned. The procuring of spare parts so delayed the work that the machine did not go into service until January last. Since then the plant has been engaged on widening and deepening drains on Kerepehi Extension Block No. 1. This work should be finished very soon, and the plant will also be transferred to work on improvements to main outlet drains. During the year the services of a private contractor using a small excavator were also secured, and this machine has been engaged for the last three months on the raising of the foreshore stop-banks from the Kairito Canal towards Waitakaruru. This plant has done an excellent job and has proved a welcome, though temporary, addition to our fleet. One further drag-line excavator has been utilized during the year. This is a small plant owned by the Thames Valley Drainage Board and has been employed on the construction of a new intake drain for the flood pumping station being erected at Awaiti South.

Comparison of Dredge Costs

Year.			Cubic Yards.	Cost per Cubic Yard.	Year.			Cubic Yards	Cost per Cubic Yard.
				d.					d.
1923-24	..	..	508,654	7-27	1936-37	..	..	171,717	8-69
1924-25	..	..	822,286	5-86	1937-38	..	..	261,347	5-72
1925-26	..	..	856,653	6-32	1938-39	..	..	266,402	6-70
1926-27	..	..	647,182	7-42	1939-40	..	..	142,517	9-48
1927-28	..	..	652,413	7-32	1940-41	..	..	195,322	5-90
1928-29	..	..	619,911	6-54	1941-42	..	..	168,644	9-09
1929-30	..	..	595,565	6-25	1942-43	..	..	88,867	9-23
1930-31	..	..	536,692	8-32	1943-44	..	..	131,934	7-85
1931-32	..	..	390,611	7-99	1944-45	..	..	171,693	9-13
1932-33	..	..	200,954	8-00	1945-46	..	..	121,595	8-79
1933-34	..	..	116,224	5-96	1946-47	..	..	79,186	11-79
1934-35	..	..	52,517	10-02	1947-48	..	..	144,126	10-50
1935-36	..	..	164,046	8-26					

Construction of the pumping-station for the Thames Valley Drainage Board which was mentioned in last year's report is now well in hand. The concrete suction bay and the pump-house have been completed, and the intake drain is about three-quarters finished.

This station will have two 5,500-gallon-per-minute, automatically-operated electrically-driven flood-pumps draining an area of 1,200 acres between the Awaiti Canal and the Awaiti South Road. One of the pumps has been received from the makers, and when the other pump and the necessary motors and electrical equipment arrive they can be installed, together with the discharge-pipes and flood-gate.

Repairs to the Pipiroa flood-gate now being carried out are necessary to deal with seepage under and around the structure resulting from the disturbance of the ground when reconstructing the stop-banks.

Extensive use was made this year of the new D4 tractor fitted with bulldozer blade and hysler winch. It was employed for some months on the construction of the Awaiti South pumping-station, and also for pulling willows out of drains on Waitoki Block, for building roads and tracks on the Opou, Pouarua, and Kerepehi Blocks, and for hauling out and loading timber logs for milling.

Considerable difficulty was experienced again this year in inducing contractors and settlers to tender for the annual drain-cleaning, and consequently a considerable amount of this work will have to be done on a wage basis. It is becoming increasingly evident that in the near future some mechanical means will have to be found to cope with the work. Considerable success is being achieved by the Overseer at Thornton with the cleaning of the larger drains by using a drag-line equipped with a tyne drag