

*No. 34 R.B. 10 Excavator.*—This plant was transferred to this district from Pongakawa at the end of June, 1948. The whole machine was in a very bad state of repair, and a complete overhaul was necessary. This work is being carried out in the workshop at Kerepeehi. Owing to the difficulty in procuring parts the work has been considerably delayed, but it is hoped that the machine will be ready to recommence work in the near future.

*No. 40 Jacques Excavator.*—This is a new plant of the R.B. 10 class which arrived in the middle of February, 1949. Considerable damage was done to the cab and superstructure during shipping from Australia, and after this had been repaired in the workshop at Kerepeehi the machine commenced the work of removing *Poa aquatica* and other weed-growth from the Pouarua Canal, near Ngatea. Excellent progress had been made using the tyne drag bucket, and by the end of March 69 chains of this canal had been cleaned.

*McRobbie Bros. R.B. 10 Excavator.*—This is a hired machine engaged to assist in the urgent work of reconstruction of the foreshore stop-banks from the Kairito Canal eastwards towards Waitakaruru. Between 1st April, 1948, and 5th May 30 chains of bank were completed by this plant. Owing to unseasonable weather, work was postponed until the end of December, when another contract was let for a further 57 chains, which was completed on 22nd February last. During the year this plant excavated and placed in stop-bank 12,876 cubic yards of spoil at an average cost of 1s. per cubic yard.

The flood-pumping station constructed in the Awaitei South district for the Thames Valley Drainage Board was completed about June, 1948, and the settlers have been very pleased with the results achieved. The area served by the pumps was kept free of flood-water all the winter, and the settlers are now cultivating and sowing in good pasture the low-lying ground which was formerly only suitable for summer grazing. The firm who supplied the pumps and motors for this station has not yet been able to provide motors of the correct horse-power, but have loaned the Department substitute ones with which to carry on. The installation of the correct horse-power motors will complete the station.

The driving of sheet piling on the intake of the Pipiroa Flood-gate, as mentioned in last year's report, was completed in May, 1948, and has proved entirely satisfactory.

No economical means of dealing with the rapid spread of the water-weed, *Poa aquatica*, have yet been discovered. Experiments being conducted by the Department of Agriculture in an attempt to discover a chemical agent capable of controlling the weed have so far been unsuccessful. In the meantime mechanical methods, such as a drag-line excavator and a grader and tractor, are being used.

On the land-development blocks and the farms being prepared in this district for the settlement of ex-servicemen very good progress has been made during the year. As evidence of the good season experienced, I would mention that 30,000 bales of hay were harvested from blocks in the Hauraki Plains district which are controlled from Kerepeehi. Development work during the year included 750 acres of new grass sown, 1,100 acres of heavy harrowing, 350 acres of stumping, and the crushing and diskings of 750 acres of scrub. Some 1,200 chains of new fencing were completed and the laying of 4,000 ft. of water-mains, and 12,000 ft. of internal piping was carried out.

Roading completed during the year included the forming and grading of 115 chains of the Reservoir Road (south side) in preparation for metalling, the regrading of 100 chains of the metalled portion of the same road, and 110 chains of the metalled portion of the Awaitei Canal Road (west side). The re-forming and grading of 550 chains of clay roads in the Pouarua Block, the formation and metalling of 5 chains of road in the Kerepeehi Block, and the metalling of about 20 chains of the Torehape Road was also carried out.