

The Department's No. 34 R.B. 10 excavator continued with the improvements to the Kaikokopu Stream, widening and deepening and removing accumulations of sand and forming this material into a stop-bank on the right bank between the road and the stream. Sixteen chains had been completed by the end of June and 3,200 cubic yards excavated. The machine, which was in a bad state of repair, was held up several times with breakages, and it was decided to transfer this plant to the Hauraki Plains and replace it with a new R.B. 19, $\frac{3}{4}$ -cubic-yard excavator, which is a larger and more powerful machine. This new plant was found to be much more useful for excavating work in this district, where the heavy layers of buried timber proved too much for the lighter machine. The new plant started work constructing the inlet to the new pump-station, and after widening and deepening the drains leading into this inlet proceeded with the first stage of the construction of the stop-bank on the south side of the Tainui Road. This bank is designed to keep flood-water out of the pumped area. The machine deepened the remainder of the Tainui Road south side drain up as far as Section 35/51 drain, a distance of 73 chains in all, 35 chains of the northern end of 35/51 drain, 36 chains of Wharere Road west side drain, 5 chains of Waerenga Road south side drain, and 16 chains of Section 23/28 drain. By the time this was completed the work done on the stop-bank on the south side of Tainui Road had consolidated sufficiently for the second stage of this construction, and the stop-bank was completed and the pumping area finally isolated by the end of January. After deepening about 10 chains of the Tainui Road north side drain the plant was transferred to work on the Wharere Canal, where the machine is working down-stream from the railway-line removing the heavy accumulations of silt and sand which have so reduced the depth of this canal to cause flooding of the land on the east side. By the end of March 22 chains had been completed, and the work was proceeding satisfactorily. During nine months in the district the plant has handled a total of 23,730 cubic yards of spoil.

The normal amount of drain-maintenance work was carried out during the year. The total length of drains cleaned by hand-labour for the twelve months ended 31st March last was 35 miles 72 chains, of which 27 miles 26 chains was let on a contract basis and 8 miles 46 chains carried out on wages.

On the Wharere Development Block considerable progress was made during the year. Immediate advantage is being taken of the installation of the new flood-pump to re-establish good pasture on the area of Crown land immediately adjoining the pump. An area of about 170 acres is being cleared, cultivated, and sown in good grass. Adjoining settlers are also clearing and resowing areas previously only partly usable. The control of the development work has been transferred to the Superintendent of Land Development, Rotorua.

On the whole, a very good dairying season has been experienced in this area, and all stock and pastures have come through the year in very good condition.

Expenditure and Rates.—Expenditure on maintenance for the year amounted to £1,559.

Rates struck : Special, £765 3s. 5d. ; general, £1,607 13s. 2d.

Rates collected, including arrears : Special, £1,048 ; general, £1,867.

POUKAWA DRAINAGE AREA (15,567 ACRES), HAWKES BAY

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