

REPORT

SINCE the last report was published the Department's Chief Drainage Engineer has retired, and by arrangement the field and engineering works carried out by him in the past are now discharged by the Ministry of Works, which has supplied the information on which this report is based.

A mild winter with adequate yet low rainfall and practically no inundation of productive lands this year has seen a most favourable season for the dairying industry on the plains, and production figures supplied show £1,772,968 for this year, compared with £1,504,635 for the 1948-49 season.

Rainfall for the year ended 31st March, 1950, at Kerepeehi was 35.80 in., the lowest since 1932, when 32.05 in. was noted, and considerably below the average of 43.53 in. for the last thirty-seven years. Greatest rainfall, 5.51 in. was recorded for the month of June, while rain fell on 142 days, and a fall exceeding 1 in. in twenty-four hours was noted on five occasions only, the heaviest fall, 2.38 in. being recorded on 8th May. The driest month was January, when 0.06 in. was recorded, while the rainfall for the four months of December, January, February, and March was only 4.5 in.

Throughout the year only a limited amount of new construction work has been undertaken, general maintenance on river channels, canals, and main drains absorbing all of the Department's available labour. Additional labour has been utilized in the letting of outlet-drain-cleaning contracts to settlers in certain areas.

Large canals and river channels have been cleaned and reformed by machine, and canal extensions, representing construction work, has continued.

Stop-bank and floodgate construction and repair for local Drainage Boards has been carried out with departmental and private machines under Works Department supervision as under :—

HAURAKI UNITED DRAINAGE BOARD

One hundred and thirty chains of stop-banking on the right bank of the Piako River below Ngatea was constructed by the Department's machine No. 16 (Bucyrus). This work was subsidized by the Soil Conservation and Rivers Control on a 3 : 1 basis.

HAURAKI PLAINS WEST DRAINAGE BOARD

Seventy chains of stop-banking on the left bank of the Waitakaruru River between the State highway bridge and Indian's Culvert was carried out by contract under Works Department supervision. Major repairs and alterations to Indian's flood-gate were also undertaken by the Department.

Construction by contract of 32 ft. of reinforced-concrete 4-ft.-diameter culvert with floodgate on the Kairito Canal preparatory to stop-bank construction was carried out. These two works carried a 3 : 1 subsidy from the Soil Conservation and Rivers Control Council and were satisfactorily completed.