

It has been evident for some time that to maintain production from the land in this district further capital works will be required to meet the changes resulting from subsidence in the peat land. To provide data for planning the necessary changes, automatic water-level recorders have been maintained at the various outlets and records kept of maximum and minimum levels at the main points.

The following is a summary of the drain-cleaning work carried out during the year :—

			M.	ch.
Drains cleaned by hand on wages	..	..	4	17
Drains cleaned by hand on contract	..	..	81	16
Drains cleaned by weed-cutter launch	..	..	14	13
Drains cleaned and deepened by excavator	..	..	21	65

Other work carried out included the cutting of gorse, blackberry, and other noxious weeds from the river-bank and drain reserves and the removal and re-erection of fences to allow the working of excavators. Willows used for protection of the Rangitaiki River bank have been trimmed and additional planting made to keep the growth in a useful state. The grids at the main floodgates have had constant cleaning.

Maintenance service for the excavators, tractors, and transport vehicles has been provided by the depot and workshop at Thornton. The problem of transport has continued to be difficult, as it has not been possible to make any replacements or additions.

EXPENDITURE AND RATES

Expenditure on maintenance for the year amounted to £16,001. Rates struck : Special, £10,464 ; general, £13,620. Rates collected, including arrears : Special, £10,501 ; general, £13,524. The amount shown as expenditure on maintenance may be subject to slight variation on completion of accounts.

MAORI RATING

Included in the figures for rates struck and rates collected are the following amounts for Maori rating : The total Maori rates paid, including arrears, during the year under review was £2,454. Maori rates struck for the year 1949–50 amounted to £2,629.

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

A statement of accounts is published in parliamentary paper B-1 [Pt. IV].

STAFF

I wish to thank the officers of the Ministry of Works for their co-operation during the year, and also make special reference to Mr. E. Taylor, who has retired from the position of Chief Drainage Engineer. He was associated with drainage projects during the greater part of his career in the Public Service, during which time he came to be held in very high regard by members of the staff and settlers alike.

Acknowledgment is also made of the useful services rendered by the three representatives of the Rangitaiki Drainage Ratepayers' Committee who, with the local departmental Engineer, form a Works Committee. This latter Committee consider routine drainage problems and assist in arriving at decisions acceptable to the Crown and ratepayers.

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