

1910.
NEW ZEALAND.

DRAINAGE OPERATIONS IN HAURAKI PLAINS:

REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH, 1910, TOGETHER WITH
STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly pursuant to Section 10 of the Hauraki Plains Act, 1908.

SIR,—

Department of Lands, Wellington, 2nd May, 1910.

I have the honour to attach herewith a report upon the drainage operations carried out for the past year under the provisions of the Hauraki Plains Act, 1908.

I have, &c.

WM. C. KENSINGTON,

The Right Hon. Sir Joseph G. Ward, P.C., K.C.M.G.,
Minister of Lands.

Under-Secretary for Lands.

REPORT.

THE attached report by the District Surveyor, Mr. J. B. Thompson, gives a full and detailed account of the excellent progress made during the past financial year. It has been demonstrated by the operations for the past year that for successive years it will be possible to open areas of land for profitable settlement. The proposed operations foreshadowed in last year's report have been vigorously prosecuted, the result being that some 17,500 acres of land have been opened for selection under the provisions of the Land Act, 1908. This includes the areas absorbed by reserves, roads, and drains, leaving 16,881 acres available for actual settlement. It is anticipated that another 12,000 acres will be ready for opening for selection during the ensuing spring and autumn. In order to make the Priestman dredges work more economically, new steel chutes have been erected on one of them: this will enable the spoil to be delivered automatically on each side of the dredge without loss of time and labour, a great improvement on the wooden structure formerly in use, and which was worked independently of the dredge. Messrs. Price Bros., of the Thames, made a capital job of the new automatic steel chutes in question. The other dredge will be treated in the same manner.

It is proposed during the coming year to take in hand the snagging of the upper portions of the Waitoa and Piako Rivers, and operations will probably be commenced early in October. The clearing of these rivers will undoubtedly allow the flood-waters to run away more quickly than at present.

Drainage-works are also being undertaken in connection with an area of Crown land within the sphere of the operations of the Waitoa Drainage Board. This will not only benefit the Crown land, but will give an outlet for the water discharged from the drains cut by the Board.

Another undertaking of considerable magnitude will be a scheme for draining the area of about 10,000 acres lying south of Kerepeehi and on the eastern side of the Piako River. This area is subject to inundations by the overflowing of the Waihou River during flood-time. The cause of the overflow is owing to the fact that the Waihou River, which carries a strong current for some fourteen or fifteen miles below Te Aroha, and runs a fairly straight course, is suddenly diverted to the eastward just below the flax-mills erected on the Waihou West No. 3 Block, and, not being able to find a vent for its flood-waters quickly enough, overflows to the westward, causing a large volume of water to find its way into the Awaiti Stream and over the Crown land to the south-west. This flood-water, together with the winter floods in the Waitoa and Piako, submerge a considerable area of Crown and Native lands. The remedy appears to be either by erecting many miles of stop-banks or possibly cutting a canal across the bends of the Waihou from the flax-mills to Thorp's Opukeko bend.