

1910.

NEW ZEALAND.

WANGANUI RIVER TRUST

(ANNUAL REPORT OF THE).

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

WANGANUI RIVER TRUST.

MEMBERS.—T. D. Cummins (Government nominee), Chairman; J. T. Stewart, W. G. Bassett, elected by the ratepayers of Wanganui; Wm. Ritchie, Chairman, Waitotara County Council; D. Mason, Chairman, Wanganui County Council; C. E. Mackay, Mayor of Wanganui; T. B. Williams, Chairman, Chamber of Commerce (also elected by ratepayers); J. T. Hogan, M.P., Wanganui; G. V. Pearce, M.P., Patea.

REPORT.

Wanganui, 15th June, 1910.

SIR,—

I now hand you report of work performed by the Wanganui River Trust for the year ended 31st March, 1910.

Owing to the late period at which the subsidy was granted, through the late session of Parliament last year, active operations were not commenced so early as has been usual. Still, a very satisfactory amount of work has been accomplished, and it is pleasing to be able to say that the river channel between Wanganui and Taumarunui is fast approaching the condition aimed at when the improvement works were first projected above the Tangarakau Junction. During the last year the traffic has been fully maintained without interruption by Messrs. Hatrick and Co.'s steamers.

The tourist traffic down stream has been fully as large as at any previous season, and the river dues on goods carried from Taumarunui have very considerably increased, showing that the river as a highway has been largely taken advantage of by settlers for carrying their goods and produce.

A wharf has been constructed at the mouth of the Ahu Ahu Stream for the convenience of the settlers in Te Tuhī and adjacent Crown Lands, and a landing-place also at Te Aukopae for the settlers residing in the Ohura district: both of these landings being on the right bank of the river.

In the early part of the working season it was found necessary to undertake some work in the vicinity of Taumarunui that was never anticipated by the Trust. The Maniopototo-Tuwharetoa Maori Land Board constructed certain groins for the protection of the esplanade at Taumarunui Township, above the junction with the Ongarue Stream, which had the effect of deflecting the greater volume of the water discharged by the Wanganui River in such a way as to make inoperative a very considerable quantity of the improvement-works on the river, and affecting it for about a distance of a mile and a quarter from Taumarunui. This matter received prompt attention, which has proved most satisfactory.

During the year the following works have been completed or were approaching completion:—

Wharf and landing at Ahu Ahu.

Landing at Te Aukopae.

Blocking vagrant channel above confluence of Wanganui and Ongarue Rivers. Dimensions of wall, 291 ft. by 6 ft. 6 in. by 4 ft., and 275 ft. by 4 ft. by 3 ft. 9 in.

Rapids Nos. 28 and 29, Ahuaroa and Koatupiko: Removing, by blasting, large boulders, &c.

Rapid No. 33, Pouwhakamaru: Wall (not measured) estimated 300 ft. by 4 ft. 6 in. by 3 ft.

Rapid No. 96, To Hui: Blasting out and removing large boulders, and clearing channel of obstructions.

Rapid No. 101, Otahapa: Wall, 264 ft. by 4 ft. by 2 ft.

Rapid No. 104, Mako Mako: Wall, 91 ft. by 5 ft. by 2 ft. 9 in.; and aprons (two), 193 ft. by 3 ft. 6 in. by 2 ft.

Rapid No. 108, Otahua: Wall, 576 ft. by 8 ft. by 2 ft. 6 in.

Rapids Nos. 159 and 160, Ngaporo: Additions to previous wall, 337 ft. by 7 ft. by 5 ft.; and apron, 150 ft. by 3 ft. by 2 ft.

Rapid No. 180, Otaiko : Stone wall (not measured), estimated, 300 ft. by 5 ft. by 3 ft. 6 in.

Rapid No. 192, Ruahinetaro : Stone wall, 312 ft. by 6 ft. by 3 ft.

As well as the above, the channel between Ngaporo (160) and Taumarunui has received considerable attention by snagging and clearing stones and boulders not previously referred to.

The concise report by Mr. J. T. Stewart, a member of the Trust, and at one time its honorary engineer, which is attached to this, has relieved me of much work in the preparation of my annual report, and I also enclose Mr. Stewart's second report, which gives valuable information as to next year's requirements. Mr. Stewart has referred to the valuable assistance given by the Trust's foreman (Captain Marshall), and I quite concur with and indorse his remarks.

It is apparent to those who take an interest in the work already performed by this Trust that most valuable work has been accomplished. The river is now in a fairly navigable condition for the 144 miles that is under the jurisdiction of the Trust, but there are still important works to be attended to. I trust that a sum of not less than £2,000 will be found on the estimates for next working season.

I am, &c.,

T. D. Cummins, Chairman.

Wm. C. Kensington, Esq., I.S.O., Under-Secretary for Lands, Wellington.

REPORT by JOHN T. STEWART, Member of the River Trust.

T. D. Cummins, Esq., Chairman of the Wanganui River Trust.

ON the 5th May, 1910, I accompanied the Chairman of the Trust from Wanganui up the river to Taumarunui, arriving there on the 7th. The river was low, and favourable for inspection of the works, the water at the gauge at Pipiriki being 4 in. above low summer level.

In general we found the river-improvement works in a satisfactory state, and the river-steamers keeping up the traffic in the low river with general regularity. In the most difficult part of the river, the upper section from Koiro, Rapid No. 65, up to Taumarunui, a distance of about twenty-one miles, the new canoe-launch "Waireka," a most suitable boat for this navigation, placed on the service last season, and capable of carrying sixty passengers, went up all the rapids save two without using auxiliary wire-rope traction.

During the present season one working-party was engaged in the upper reaches from Taumarunui downwards. The stoppage of the vagrant channel in the Wanganui opposite Taumarunui which broke through in the winter and threatened to withdraw a great portion of the water from its former course, which led to the improved navigation channel from the junction of the Ongarue River for a considerable distance downwards, was in the commencement of this season successfully carried out, although a difficult work, by the foreman of works, Mr. A. Marshall, and this has attained the object required.

This party also worked downwards to below the Retaruke Junction for a distance of about thirty-five miles, repairing and lengthening and putting in new training-walls at shallows, and clearing rocks and timber where required. This party now goes on to Tarepokiore, Rapid No. 128, where some more of the cliff on the right bank requires removal where the channel is narrowed by the large slip on the left bank, and which work, being chiefly blasting above low water, can be undertaken in winter.

A second party was employed above Pipiriki as far up as Otaiko, Rapid No. 180, a distance of about fifteen miles, doing similar work, one of the principal being at the upper Ngaporo, Rapid No. 189, which is one of the most difficult rapids on the river, strengthening and repairing the training-wall from the left bank, thus giving more water in the channel.

In next season it is proposed that one party continue the work in the upper reaches, where some training-walls are required at shallows, and where maintenance and repairs will always be heavier than in the lower courses of the river.

The second party next season, it is proposed, will take up the repair and improvement from Pipiriki downwards to the commencement of the River Trust district at Raorikia, a distance of about forty miles. Here several repairs are wanted, where minor additions were made to some of the stone training-walls by adding wire-netting walling. These repairs will be done with stonework, the material for which is more easily got here than in the upper reaches, where the shingle is heavier and more suited for netting-work.

If this lower section is carefully gone over next season, and weather is advantageous for work, the future maintenance here should be moderate.

I have sent you a separate report, with detailed notes taken on this visit between Wanganui and Taumarunui; and a copy of this might be given to the foreman of works for his information for next season.

Lately a good deal of attention has been drawn to the question of deforestation affecting the water-supply to the river. This is manifestly a most important consideration for the Wanganui River Trust, as any diminution in the water-level in low-river periods would certainly interfere with the navigation. Up till now no serious effect has occurred, but with the evident and increasing progress of settlement there is little doubt it may seriously occur in the near future. There is a certain amount of valuable storage in the snowfall on the Tongariro-Ruapehu Ranges, but the main supply to the river is from the rainfall, and the forest growths along the river and its numerous tributaries conserve this for a supply in prolonged droughts. A reservation has been made along both banks of the Wanganui itself below Taumarunui wherever there are Crown lands. This is important, but the reservation of forest in the upper courses of the river and its tributaries is even more important. Take one of the numerous tributaries, the Whakapapa, which draws water from the western slopes of Ngaruhoe and Ruapehu : This stream joins the Wanganui above Piriaka, and its volume bears a considerable proportion to the

flow of the main river here. This stream may be seen from the railway flowing through and protected by the yet untouched forest. The Ongarue, joining at Taumarunui, is another very important tributary, with its affluents drawing supply from the Tuhua Ranges and the adjoining hills. The streams joining the Wanganui above the junction of the Whakapapa, and also the Retaruke and the Manganui-o-te-ao on the eastern watershed, with the Ohura, the Tangarakau, and the Whangamomona on the western side, with their tributary streams and numerous other feeders on both sides, are all important.

The Wanganui River being used for navigation, both for settlement and scenic-route purposes, and much work having been successfully done to improve it for this purpose, forms a special case, and the matter is urgent. A comprehensive scheme of forest-conservation over the whole of the Wanganui watershed area, where yet unsettled, is desirable if the river is to be kept available for light-draught navigation. The maintaining of this in low-river times is even at present a matter of some difficulty, and the whole question referred to herein is most important in the interests of the future.

Wanganui, 15th June, 1910.

JOHN T. STEWART.

SECOND REPORT.

The Chairman, Wanganui River Trust.

I FORWARD herewith some notes taken on this visit. A copy of these notes might be given to the foreman of works, Mr. A. Marshall, for his information for next season's work.

Below Pipiriki.

Tupapa Rapid, No. 235.—The wire-net wall requires repair. This is only a short wire-net wall at the outer end of old wall. Stones to be used and run along the net wall. A few stones also to be put where wall joins right bank.

Whakaruawaka, No. 231.—The wire-net wall requires repairs with stones. The long wire-net wall from right bank has the shingle mostly washed out, and should be renewed by wall of large stones. This work is urgent. Also repair gap in stone wall at top of rapid.

Auokura, No. 229.—Wire-net wall from left bank might be renewed with large stones.

Upokopoto, No. 228.—The stone wall at right bank at lower end wants some stones at inner end and up along the bank there, to check the scour at bank. Also slight repair to gap of blocking wall at upper end of rapid.

Umutapi, No. 222.—A low place in wall. Not urgent.

Ruapirau, No. 213.—Some more stone protection on right bank wanted below what was done formerly opposite the training-wall. Also a few large stones where the wall on left bank joins the cliff.

At *Kawana* a training wall would improve the channel.

Motoa, No. 207.—The lower wall requires making up where it joins the island.

In the Upper Portions of the River.

He Repu, No. 75.—Wire-net wall right bank. Lower end dropped, also at bend in middle, and gap at top. There are stones on left bank for repairs.

Between No. 68 and No. 67.—A shallow may want a wall in future, but boat got up well.

Arataua, No. 67.—Long wire-net wall sunk for half a chain; still acting well.

Te Aukopae, No. 53.—Captain of steamer says a bit of papa to be removed from channel.

Te Rata, No. 40.—Some stones to clear out.

Motutara, No. 35.—Somewhat shallow. Boat got up well.

Powhakamaru, No. 33.—Wire-net wall from left bank damaged a good deal for 2 or 3 chains. The other wall, right bank, is good.

Manawanawa, No. 31.—Good water. Some small stones to clear out.

Titakataka, No. 23.—The wall on right bank wants repair at gap close to bank.

Wairere, No. 18.—Wire-net wall on right bank broken at end.

Tauteti, No. 16.—The wall on left bank wants repair. The shingle has banked up on channel side of wall, right bank, and narrows the channel a good deal. A boulder in the channel in the run above Tauteti might be taken out.

Rakauwhakamatuka, No. 15.—The turn might be eased in manner pointed out by foreman of works formerly.

Te Whenua, No. 14.—The channel is scoured down to papa bottom. Any lumps in bottom might be seen to.

Tuangahoru, No. 5.—The right bank is wearing away, and may widen the channel here and give shallow water. This should be watched.

Ngahuinga, No. 1.—The wall on left bank showing signs of sinking in parts.

N.B.—There are also some training-walls required at several shallows which the foreman of works is aware of.

Wanganui, 15th June, 1910.

JOHN T. STEWART.

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