

1911.
NEW ZEALAND.

DRAINAGE OPERATIONS IN RANGITAIKI PLAINS:

REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH, 1911; TOGETHER WITH STATEMENT
OF ACCOUNTS.

*Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly pursuant to Section 10 of the Rangitaiki Land
Drainage Act, 1910.*

SIR,—

Department of Lands, Wellington, 24th June, 1911.

I have the honour to forward herewith a report upon the drainage operations in the Rangitaiki Plains, carried out in pursuance of the provisions of the Rangitaiki Land Drainage Act, 1910, under your direction.

I have, &c.,

WM. C. KENSINGTON,

Under-Secretary of Lands.

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

REPORT.

THIS being the first report presented under the provisions of the Rangitaiki Land Drainage Act of last session, it may be well to briefly recapitulate the circumstances that led up to the passing of the Act and the management of the drainage operations by the Minister of Lands.

The usual practice, when lands held privately are desired to be drained, is for the ratepayers to form themselves into a Drainage Board under the provisions of the Land Drainage Act, 1908, and to raise loans for the carrying-out of the necessary drainage-works, repaying the same, and also paying the annual expenses of administration and interest on loans, from a rate to be levied on the value of lands within the district deriving benefit from the said works. This course was first followed by the settlers of the Rangitaiki Plains.

The Rangitaiki River Land Drainage District was constituted by Order in Council dated the 18th December, 1894, published in the *New Zealand Gazette* of the 20th December, 1894. It comprised lands situated roughly between the Tarawera, Rangitaiki, and Whakatane Rivers, and extended from a mile or two north of Te Teko to the Bay of Plenty. The land is largely rich alluvial or pumice soil, much subject to flooding from the Rangitaiki and Tarawera Rivers, which has greatly retarded the settlement of the district and the profitable utilization of the lands.

The total area of the land within the district is about 87,000 acres, held under various forms of tenure ranging from Native leaseholds to European freeholds, but a great part is still held under lease or license from the Crown. The following table gives approximately the respective areas of the several tenures:—

	Acres.
Private freehold lands	7,670
Native lands	31,500
Public reserves	800
Lands leased from the Crown	36,925
Unoccupied Crown lands (sandhills, &c.)	10,205
	87,100

Of this area only a portion was affected by the Land Drainage Board's operations—namely, about 39,242 acres—valued at £88,280, owned or occupied by fifty-nine ratepayers. This com-