STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS (AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 10 OF THE HAURAKI PLAINS ACT, 1908) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH, 1917.

Receipts.

1916—April 1st.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
To Balance—Cash in Public Account		8,474 12 0
Receipts under section 5, Hauraki Plains Act, 1908—		
Rents	10,759 9 7	
Land-sales ..	8,548 0 7	
Miscellaneous ..	323 5 3	
		19,630 15 5
		£28,105 7 5

Expenditure.

1917—March 31st.	£ s. d.
By Expenditure—	
Drainage-works, stop-banks, clearing channels, and all expenses incidental thereto	10,590 6 7
Equipment of dredges, repairs and maintenance thereof, wages of dredgemasters and men	2,557 11 1
Travelling-allowances and general expenses	145 13 8
Office expenses—Thames	107 13 1
Sinking artesian wells for settlers ..	328 18 5
Compensation for land acquired in connection with drainage-works ..	206 11 8
	13,936 14 6
Interest recouping the Consolidated Fund in respect of debentures issued	4,469 3 4
Balance—Cash in Public Account ..	9,699 9 7
	£28,105 7 5

Loan Account.

1917—March 31st.	£ s. d.
To Balance	162,070 0 0
	£162,070 0 0

1916—April 1st.	£ s. d.
By Balance due to Local Bodies' Loans Account	42,070 0 0
Debentures issued under the State-guaranteed Advances Act, 1909, and amendments	95,000 0 0
Debentures issued under the New Zealand Loans Act, 1908	16,000 0 0
Debentures issued under the Hauraki Plains Amendment Act, 1913 ..	9,000 0 0
	£162,070 0 0

REPORT OF CHIEF DRAINAGE ENGINEER.

SIR,—

The work of the year has consisted principally of maintenance, and, as was mentioned in last annual report, expenditure on the main development scheme has been considerably curtailed on account of the war. Opportunity has been taken, however, to improve the efficiency of existing drainage system, and the work done during the year will have a very beneficial effect in unwatering the country in the future.

The maintenance of existing drains has been a very heavy undertaking, the growth in drains being exceptionally strong and the supply of labour exceedingly scanty.

The drainage system in the settled portion of the plains, particularly between Kerepeehi and Hauraki Gulf, has stood the test of the wettest season experienced in the district. The drains have acted well, and no trouble from flooding has been experienced, with the exception of part of Shelly Beach area.

During the year a cheese-factory was started at Kopuarahi, and there is every probability of another one being established at Hopai.

The settlers continue to rapidly improve their holdings, but have this year experienced probably the worst weather conditions for the last sixty years. The results, therefore, have not been up to expectations, but nevertheless very solid progress is noticeable everywhere.

Owing to the scarcity of labour, and other conditions, no new areas have been placed on the market, and that now under development is being reserved for returned soldiers.

PRIESTMAN DREDGES.

During the year both dredges have been employed on various works between Puhanga Canal and the junction of the Waitoa and Piako Rivers.

The total amount of spoil dredged and deposited on banks was 161,674 cubic yards, at a total cost of £2,292 0s. 5d., averaging 3·4d. per cubic yard; and taking into account the increased cost of wages, coal, and supplies generally this is very reasonable. The average cost of working is actually less than shown above, on account of expenditure for coal, twelve months' supply being placed alongside dredges in November on account of shortage threatening through labour troubles. Supplies as received are debited to current year's costs. No. 1 dredge in the Waitoa Canal met with exceedingly hard country, thus lessening greatly the spoil-output and increasing cost of repairs. No. 2 dredge has also met with difficult country, and repairs were a very considerable item.