

DRAINS IN OPERATION.

The total length of drains now in operation is 339 miles 14 chains, which total includes all classes of drains constructed by the Department. Some of these drains, however, have been practically discarded; especially is this so in the deep peat country, where the peat has subsided and the drains are for all purposes non-existent. The total length of new drains completed during the year was 11 miles 15 chains.

BUILDINGS.

It has been necessary to go in for extensive hut-building during the year. Sixteen huts, in pairs, have been erected at Rawerawe for the Department's employees. The workmen are mostly Maoris in this locality, and these huts take the place of their old whares, which were past living in and most insanitary. A small rental per week is paid for each pair of huts, which will reimburse the Department for expenditure made. The supply of labour in this locality is now on a solid footing, and the living-conditions of the Natives vastly improved.

A hut has also been built for the new foreman at Awaiti, and repair work done to existing huts and buildings. New buildings have also been erected at Hopai for a permanent depot and for manufacture of reinforced-concrete pipes. The total number of buildings is now fifty-six.

FLOATING PLANT.

The floating plant is the same as formerly—viz., two Priestman grab dredges, one steamer, four oil-launches, four large and two small pontoons.

ARTESIAN BORING PLANT.

The total number of bores sunk by the Department is now 136, the year's operations accounting for thirteen. The total cost for the year was £323 0s. 5d., bringing the total spent to date to £3,339 19s. 7d., which is all recoverable.

A schedule of bores sunk is attached.

WORKS PERFORMED DURING THE YEAR.

The following works were carried out under either the piecework or co-operative contract systems:—

	M.	ch.
Double drain and road formation	0	18½
New drain and road formation	1	46
Deepening and widening road-drains and spreading spoil ...	1	34
Clearing and grubbing roads	0	31
Cleaning road-drains	16	16
Outlets	1	19
Deepening and widening outlets	8	66
Cleaning outlets	5	33
Road-formation	0	33
Shelling roads	0	40

Distance covered 36 16½

Supply of sleepers for metalling—Truck-line, 1,250; Patetonga line, 650. Supply of fascines for roads, 1,800 bundles; piles for wharves, 70.

The following works were carried out by day-labour:—

	M.	ch.
Deepening and widening road-drains and spreading spoil ...	1	70
Road-formation	1	77
Widening road-formation	1	40
Sanding roads	0	40
Metalling roads	4	33
Cleaning road-drains	63	45
Outlets	1	46
Deepening and widening outlets	12	0
Cleaning outlets	30	0
Disking roads	4	0
Shelling roads	0	52

Distance covered 122 3

Spoil removed by dredges, 161,674 cubic yards; artesian bores sunk, 13; construction of bridge, 1; construction of wharves, 2; construction of flood-gates, 2. There were also numerous minor services performed too numerous to schedule.

FLOODS.

A record rainfall was recorded on the gauge at Kerepeehi for the past year, 55·37 in. being registered. In consequence of this exceptional rainfall numerous floods were experienced outside the central area, in the Awaiti and Waitakaruru portions of the plains; also a certain amount of flooding occurred on the Shelly Beach area.

Dealing with the central area itself, it speaks volumes for the efficiency of the drains when they could comfortably cope with this rainfall. A few small portions of this area, although not troubled with floods, were wetter than usual. This was owing to shortage of labour, which prevented the drains in the locality from receiving proper cleaning. The drain-cleaning is now, however, well in hand.