

year amounts to £102,316, which shows an increase of £30,876 on last year's sales. A great deal of stock is also sent by road to the outside freezing-works, and saleyards are also operating at Turua and Hikutaia.

The increased trade to the plains is evidenced by the fact that there are now two steamers running two return trips per week from Auckland to Kerepeehi, in place of one as formerly. The amount of tonnage carried on the river by steamers trading direct to Auckland amounted to approximately 5,719 tons, and in addition some 2,500 tons of cargo was handled by the launches running between Thames and the plains. Every effort is being made to hasten development, and my visit to America for the purpose of purchasing further plant should result in the acquisition of the most modern types of excavators, thus hastening development of waste lands.

The butter-output was valued at £83,850, and the cheese-output at £29,950.

AWAITI DISTRICT.

During the year this district has advanced considerably, and the work completed has resulted in not only the efficient working of the drainage system, but the road access has been considerably improved.

The Pukahu Road—from the Awaitei-Netherton Road to Waihou River stop-bank—was formed for the total distance of 125 chains. A new 8 by 4 by 6 drain was constructed along the south side of this road from the Waitoa stop-bank to the Hauraki Plains boundary, a distance of 90 chains; while on the north side a 4 by 3 by 2 drain was constructed for the whole length of 135 chains. This road allows of much quicker access to Paeroa for settlers on the Awaitei Block.

The main Awaitei-Netherton Road was re-formed, stumped, and graded, and after many efforts a supply of metal was obtained for same. To date 1,182 cubic yards of metal have been put down for a distance of 49 chains. This work will be continued, and the metalling of the whole length of road should be completed towards the end of the coming year.

A new drain was constructed along the northern boundary of the block from the Awaitei-Netherton Road to the Awaitei Stream, a distance of 147 chains; while new drains from the western boundary of the block were opened up to the Awaitei Stream at West Road (north and south sides) and Pukahu Road (north side). The Awaitei-Netherton Road drains were deepened to new grades, and all other drains in the area kept in a good state of efficiency. Two 2 ft. Monier culverts were also constructed.

TAHUNA DISTRICT.

The work during the year has been principally the maintenance of existing drains and the repairing and re-forming of roads. Three old sill bridges were removed and replaced with concrete culverts. The difficulty of obtaining labour has prevented the carrying-out of the road-improvement on a sufficiently large scale, but arrangements have now been made for a large contract plant to undertake same. Another contract which has been arranged is for the widening and deepening of the Whakahoro Road drain from the Piako River to the No. 7 Road. This drain will be considerably deepened, and when completed will cut off from the Tahuna area the water that comes down from the Waitoa district, and which previously hampered to a certain extent the drainage operations within this area.

PATETONGA DISTRICT.

The principal feature in connection with the work in this district was the opening by ballot, for returned soldiers, of twenty-four sections ranging in size from 62 acres to 175 acres and a total area of 2,526 acres. This country consists of a good loamy peat on clay, and on the very reasonable rentals at which they were opened the successful settlers should have a prosperous future. It was necessary to construct thirteen miles of new drains in addition to two and a quarter miles of new road-formation in connection with the opening-up of these sections.

Very good progress has been made with the construction of the Ngarua Road from the metalled portion near the flax-mill towards the canal leading from the Piako River. This work was commenced last year, and work has been continuous on same with the exception of about three months in the winter, when work had to cease. Altogether 9,199 cubic yards of spoil was carted for this road during the year, making the total distance completed 220 chains. This road, with the exception of a few chains, is now linked up with the stop-bank road along the Ngarua Canal, providing access for motors, &c., to the Patetonga district from the northern portion of the plains. Although a liberal thickness of clay has been laid down, it will be necessary to further increase this owing to the consolidation of the peat. The Patetonga South Road has received like attention, 11,345 cubic yards of clay having been put on. This road was originally formed very narrow, and has been widened to a minimum width of 18 ft., while the crown of the road has been built up several feet in height.

The Mangawhero Road has been pushed on with, some 3,399 cubic yards having been carted for same, a distance of 50 chains being completed for the year. A considerable amount of shingle has been lifted from the creeks and drains and placed on adjacent roads. Most of the above work has been carried out by contract, while the day-labour men have been engaged on the construction of new drains, and deepening and cleaning of the existing ones.

The Patetonga tram-line has been in course of reconstruction, but this work was considerably delayed owing to inability to procure materials. An oil-engine was procured for this line, and a passenger-car and goods-truck built for same.

Several concrete culverts were installed, in addition to a large bridge culvert which replaced the old wooden bridge over Patetonga Stream near the flax-mill. A new hardwood bridge was also constructed over the Waikaka outlet on the Patetonga South Road.