

1922.

NEW ZEALAND.

DEPARTMENT OF LANDS AND SURVEY.

DRAINAGE OPERATIONS IN HAURAKI PLAINS.

REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH, 1922, TOGETHER WITH STATEMENT
OF ACCOUNTS.*Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly pursuant to Section 10 of the Hauraki Plains Act, 1908.*

SIR,—

Department of Lands and Survey, Wellington, 21st September, 1922.

I have the honour to submit herewith the report on the drainage operations in the Hauraki Plains for the past year, in accordance with the provisions of the Hauraki Plains Act, 1908.

The total area opened for selection to date is 42,166 acres, sold at £307,630, but at present-day values worth considerably more. It is hoped to open 2,600 acres, valued at £35,000, during the coming year.

The detailed report of the Acting Chief Drainage Engineer is attached, together with a statement of accounts and balance-sheet.

I have, &c.,

J. B. THOMPSON, Under-Secretary.

The Hon. D. H. Guthrie, Minister of Lands.

REPORT OF ACTING CHIEF DRAINAGE ENGINEER.

SIR,—

I have the honour to submit this report of the progress of the work on the Hauraki Plains drainage scheme for the year ended 31st March, 1922.

Activity in agricultural productiveness is indicated by the fact that the value of stock-sales held at Ngatea, Waitakaruru, and Patetonga yards was approximately £27,000. Cheese produced on the plains amounted to 1,812,700 lb., and butter to 2,535,700 lb. The amount of tonnage carried to and from the Piako River by the steamship companies trading direct to Auckland was approximately 5,700 tons, in addition to which the trade between Thames and the plains comprised some 40 tons of cargo, 50,000 ft. of timber, 1,000 posts, and 10,000 bricks. These figures justify an optimistic forecast of the prosperity which will result from the development of the unsurpassed resources of this area.

A rainfall of 46.34 in. for the year was recorded at Kerepeehi. Rain fell on 127 days during the year, and was the cause of frequent interruptions in development-works; but one gratifying feature has been the entire absence of any flooding in the reclaimed areas.

The following is a summary of the main features of the year's work:—

DREDGES.

The arrival of new and improved types of dredges has established new standards of progress. Three of the new machines have been operating for some time, and a fourth, the Rood Construction Company's walking dredge, has just been erected and undergone successful trials. Depreciation due to long service has not prevented the three Priestman dredges from doing good service.

The No. 19 Michigan walking dredge was erected, and on the 10th November commenced the construction of a drain and stop-bank on the Piako River. 30,069 cubic yards have been excavated, the cost per cubic yard being 5.58d. In common with all the new machines, excavating-costs have fallen rapidly as the operators become more experienced, and the present cost is 4.45d. per cubic yard.

The No. 15 Bucyrus drag-line excavator has been in commission since the 4th January, 1922, and is constructing a stop-bank on the eastern bank of the Piako River near Kerepeehi. This machine is operating in a forest of willow-stumps, using an extension boom of 50 ft. with half-yard bucket,