

EASTERN DISTRICT.

All drains in this district have been periodically cleaned, and in some cases deepened, during the year, and are all in very fair order. The Eastern drain, from the Kopeopeo Canal southwards, was thoroughly cleaned and deepened, and is working well. The extra fall obtained through the operation of No. 17 dredge (Monighan) in the Orini Stream and deviations has been taken up in the Kopua drain, and a commencement made with Lawson's drain. The surrounding country, which is of the finest land in the district, has benefited materially, and a much larger area has been cropped than previously. A hand-drain was run from the Te Rahu outfall to the White-pine Bush to deviate the water from the Waioho Stream, and as soon as the country consolidates sufficiently the Bay City dredge will be shifted across to widen and deepen this. The Priestman dredge working in the Kopeopeo deviation deepening, and the work done by the Monighan dredges in the Te Rahu, Mangaroa, and Whakaire Canal, have enabled fall to be taken up throughout the drains emptying into these cuts.

WESTERN DISTRICT.

A wonderful improvement is noticeable in the country between the Rangitaiki River and the Omeheu. This is due to the operations of Priestman dredge in the Omeheu Canal, enabling the fall to be taken up in all the smaller outlet drains emptying into this outfall. A gang is at present employed in taking up the extra depth obtainable in the Adjunct drain, and when this is completed this area will be in fair order. The other outfall drains here have been kept in good order and deepened where necessary. On completion of deviation in Tarawera River, extra depth was taken up in the Tumurenui drain, a big improvement being noticeable. The Awakaponga and Collins drain required constant attention during the year owing to the abnormal growth of weeds. When the Priestman dredge which is starting on the Awakaponga Canal has completed the cut the maintenance work here will be considerably lightened. The Awarua and other outfalls on this side of Tarawera have required a fair amount of maintaining, but generally material improvement is expected with the completion of Awakaponga Canal. A flood-gate was erected at the old mouth of the Rangitaiki River, and this is working well, the water-level inside having been lowered averagely 18 in. A start was made with a boulder groyne to straighten the mouth of the Tarawera River where it has deviated from the old channel in the sandhills, and when this is completed and the outlet confined to a straight channel it is hoped that the full benefits will be derived from the flood-gate on the old Rangitaiki River.

DREDGES.

Altogether seven dredges, comprising four Priestman, two Monighan drag-lines, and one Bay City walking-dredge have been continuously employed on the works. A total of 540,802 cubic yards was lifted during the period, covering a distance of 1,990 chains. Nearly all the repair work for these plants has been done in our own workshops and smithy at Thornton, and this has greatly lessened the delay experienced when work had to be sent out of the district, and also the cost of the repairs.

No. 3 Priestman dredge, one of the original purchases, is still in good order, but the pontoon will need replacing very shortly. During the period this dredge worked down Reid's Central drain deepening, then westwards along Kopeopeo outfall and back down Kopeopeo outfall deviation. The machine has now come up to the Kopeopeo outfall again, and after going a short way up the Western drain will work eastwards along that outfall. This will practically complete the dredging programme for this plant. A total of 107,742 cubic yards was excavated during the year.

No. 4 Priestman dredge, on the Omeheu Canal, has been doing good work, a distance of 359 chains being dredged and 82,319 yards of spoil lifted. At the beginning of the period the dredge was working up to connect with Tengaroa drain, which she reached in July. The machine is now working downstream, and will continue through to the flood-gate on Tarawera River.

No. 8 Priestman dredge has been employed on the Tarawera River taking off bends and building a stop-bank on the eastern bank to prevent flooding. During the period a total of 119 chains was covered, and 48,584 yards lifted, and deposited to form a stop-bank.

No. 9 Priestman dredge completed dredging in Section 109 drain early in the period, and after working down was put on to build a channel through the Koheka Lagoon, a distance of 30 chains. This necessitated the wattling of both banks of proposed cut and the formation of banks behind wattling, the main difficulty encountered being the obtaining of spoil to form banks. This work was completed late in the year, and a splendid job made of same. The dredge was then thoroughly overhauled preparatory to commencing work on the Awakaponga outfall and drain, of which at the end of the period she had completed 10 chains. A total of 87,835 yards of spoil were lifted, covering a distance of 264 chains.

No. 17 Monighan dredge commenced working at the Whakatane River end of the Te Rahu Canal, completed a distance of 74 chains, and was then moved across country to the mouth of the Orini Stream, when work was commenced on the widening and deepening of this stream and its deviations. A distance of 117 chains has been covered to date. Altogether during the period a total of 191 chains was dredged and 76,088 yards of spoil were lifted.

No. 18 Monighan dredge commenced working on the Te Rahu Canal, widening and deepening, and worked up the Mangaroa Canal, then down and up the Whakaire Canal, where the machine finished up late in the period. The dredge is now being moved down to the eastern end of Kopeopeo outfall to deepen this westwards until it connects up with Priestman No. 3. The Mangaroa, Whakaire, and Te Rahu Canals are now in splendid order, and no further trouble is expected from this quarter. Altogether the dredge covered a distance of 222 chains, lifting 56,487 cubic yards.