

1927.
NEW ZEALAND

DEPARTMENT OF LANDS AND SURVEY.

SWAMP DRAINAGE.

REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH, 1927, TOGETHER WITH STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly pursuant to Section 13 of the Swamp Drainage Act, 1915.

SIR,—

Department of Lands and Survey, Wellington, 30th June, 1927.

In pursuance of section 13 of the Swamp Drainage Act, 1915, I have the honour to forward the report of the Chief Drainage Engineer covering operations on lands proclaimed under the Swamp Drainage Act and amendments.

The spoil dealt with comprised over 291,000 cubic yards, including a great deal of rock. The various machines have naturally been subject to severe wear-and-tear, but have been maintained in good working-order.

Dredging-work in the Kaitaia area will probably be completed at an early date. In the Waihi area the drainage scheme has been practically completed, and maintenance of constructed works is now the principal work.

Illustrative plans are also attached.

I have, &c.,

J. B. THOMPSON, Under-Secretary.

The Hon. A. D. McLeod, Minister of Lands.

REPORT BY CHIEF DRAINAGE ENGINEER.

SIR,—

I have the honour to submit my annual report on the areas proclaimed under the Swamp Drainage Act, 1915, and amendments.

KAITAIA DRAINAGE AREA (61,430 ACRES), MONGONUI COUNTY.

In May, 1926, a departmental committee was set up to investigate this district, the most important items on which it was requested to report being (1) the capacity of the district to bear the charges leviable under the Swamp Drainage Act, (2) the amount of assistance by way of a grant or subsidy that the area should receive, (3) the future control of the area. As a result of this report an amendment to the Swamp Drainage Act was passed by Parliament whereby the capital cost of the works was fixed at £125,000, of which amount £15,000 is to be a charge against the Kaitaia Town Board area, the balance of £110,000 to be a charge against the county portion of the drainage district. This writing-down is practically equivalent to a pound-for-pound subsidy, and the fact that the capital cost is now fixed should assist in stabilizing the finances of the district.

Dairy-farming, which is the main source of income, has, unfortunately, not yet reached a very high standard. This is evident, as the average butterfat production of the district is low, being only 150 lb. per cow. There should not be any great difficulty in increasing this figure, and if farming methods are improved at the same time the district will become quite prosperous.

In anticipation of drainage rates being struck at an early date, the area has been classified under the provisions of the Swamp Drainage Act. At present a revaluation is being carried out by the Valuation Department, as it was considered there were too many anomalies under the old valuation.

Rainfall records have been kept at Kaitaia, and readings taken daily showing water-level at Kaitaia in the Awanui River. The total rainfall for the year was 64.91 in., which is the heaviest recorded since the works were commenced, the average over that period being 48.9 in. The wettest month was October, when 9.62 in. were recorded, whilst the driest was December, with 1.51 in. Rain was recorded as having fallen on 167 days during the year. The lowest level obtained in the river at the Waikuruki Bridge was 53.9 ft., whilst the highest was 72 ft., this latter following a fall of 3.34 in. in twenty-four hours, causing severe floods, which inundated a large area of low-lying country.