

Huts and cookhouses were provided at a camp near the Kaihere Ferry to accommodate the fifty men engaged on this work. Flax-plants that would have been destroyed by construction works were transplanted, and additional plants required were obtained by thinning out in swamp areas having thick natural growth of flax. The transplanted flax is now well established, and the potential value of these flax plantations appears to fully justify the planting of additional areas of waste land.

All stores, fuel, and construction material are delivered from the central depot at Kerepeehi, and two launches are engaged on this work. Kerepeehi has been the headquarters for a large number of workmen engaged on works connected with the Piako River improvement scheme and the many minor works carried out, including the raising and extension of the Waikoura Stream stop-bank, construction of 260 chains of fencing, the grubbing and spraying of blackberries, destruction of willows, cutting and hauling 539 white-pine logs for piles, earthwork timbering, dredge-pads, and other purposes.

PATETONGA DISTRICT.

A scheme for metalling 8 miles 20 chains of the Patetonga Main Road and 100 chains of the Patetonga Landing Road was inaugurated this year, and a contract let for the supply and delivery of 13,950 cubic yards of metal from a quarry which has been opened on land owned by the Hauraki Plains County Council. Owing to delays in the delivery of the crushing plant, the contractor supplied only 552 cubic yards of broken metal to the end of the period under review. The formation of access road to quarry, stripping of overburden at face, and installation of crushing plant occupied some time, but now that most of the preliminary work has been done sufficient metal should be supplied to lay first course on unmetalled gap in the Morrinsville-Patetonga Road before the winter. The formation of the road for metalling is being carried out with the Department's road plant, and 2 miles of formation has been completed. 1,262 cubic yards of clay was carted for filling depressions and haunching metal where the road-bed consists of clay ballast laid on peat.

Drain maintenance included cleaning 42 miles 65 chains of drains, and excavation of 2,883 cubic yards in widening and deepening of 3 miles 33 chains. The tramway service for the conveyance of goods from Patetonga Wharf to township was maintained, and permanent-way repaired.

AWAITI DISTRICT.

Steady progress has been made with the main drainage scheme for the Elstow-Awaiti district. The peat on the line of the Upper Elstow Canal had been sufficiently consolidated by hand-dug drains to allow a shallow channel to be dredged for the entire length of the canal. This preliminary canal will be deepened after allowing time for further consolidation of the peat, and in the meantime the drain connecting with the Elstow Drainage Board's main outlet at Tirohia-Otway Road is being widened, and road-bridge constructed, to provide a new drainage outlet early this winter for the lower portion of the central area of the Elstow Drainage District.

The portion of the drainage system of the Netherton Settlement discharging into the Waihou River was taken over by the new Netherton Drainage Board in September. During the year 13 miles 25 chains of drains were cleaned, 5 miles 71 chains of drain-improvement carried out, requiring 5,624 cubic yards of excavation, and 7,103 cubic yards excavated in the construction of 2 miles of new drain; 60 chains of road was formed on left bank of the Awaiti Canal, and 2 miles of road disked.

TAHUNA DISTRICT.

This district is now the Tahuna Drainage District, under the control of a local Board, but the Department has carried out a considerable amount of work this year in connection with the Waitoa Drainage Canal. The canal is 3 miles long, and provides a direct outlet to the Waitoa River for the western area of the Waitoa Drainage District. Four 35 ft to 30 ft span rolled-steel joist bridges on pile abutments have been constructed on the canal, and about 240 chains of fencing. The completion of these works within one year is satisfactory, as the settlers have been anxious to secure the drainage improvement before the coming winter.

STRUCTURAL WORK.

Particulars of the bridges built during the year are: Awaiti Canal Bridge—total length 117 ft., five spans, all hardwood; Paeroa-Tahuna Road Bridge—one 35 ft. span, rolled-steel joists and hardwood abutments and deck; two access bridges of 30 ft. span, rolled-steel joists with hardwood deck and abutments.

A 4-ft.-diameter one-barrel flood-gate, and 3-ft.-diameter pipe culvert, 100 ft. long, were completed at Hopai during the year, and a similar flood-gate is under construction at Rawerawe. A large 4-ft.-diameter two-barrel flood-gate and 4-ft.-diameter road-culvert at Pipiroa are nearing completion. A temporary flood-gate was constructed at Ngatea, where slide of river-bank after dredging damaged a permanent structure.

A combined kitchen and dining-room, 54 ft. by 16 ft., was constructed at Kaihere for accommodation of workmen, and a large hut and several small huts were re-erected or moved to this camp. A small cottage of three rooms was built for ferryman, one settler's house was moved for deviation of road, and two cow-sheds removed and re-erected with concrete floors and yards.

Excavation to enlarge the waterway under the Ngatea Bridge necessitated the placing of additional sway-bracing on several piers. A small wharf was constructed on the Piako River, repairs to buildings and bridges carried out, and two houses painted.