

1929.
NEW ZEALAND.

DEPARTMENT OF LANDS AND SURVEY.
RANGITAIKI LAND DRAINAGE.

REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH, 1929, TOGETHER WITH STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly in pursuance of Section 10 of the Rangitaiki Land Drainage Act, 1910.

SIR,—

Department of Lands and Survey, Wellington, 1st July, 1929.

I have the honour to submit herewith the report upon drainage operations in the Rangitaiki Plains for the year ended 31st March, 1929, pursuant to the provisions of the Rangitaiki Land Drainage Act, 1910.

The accompanying statement of accounts and balance-sheet shows the financial transactions for the year, and the position of the account as at the 31st March last. A plan of the drainage district is attached.

I have, &c.,

J. B. THOMPSON,

Under-Secretary for Lands.

The Hon. G. W. Forbes, Minister of Lands.

REPORT OF CHIEF DRAINAGE ENGINEER.

SIR,—

In accordance with the provisions of the Rangitaiki Land Drainage Act, 1910, I have the honour to submit report on these operations for the fiscal year ended 31st March, 1929.

The main construction projects in hand during the previous year were the Kopeopeo Canal diversion—excavating, bridging, and flood-gating—and the Tarawera River stop-banking. Both these works were completed during the period under review. The walking plants engaged on the former work were transferred for dredging projects in other swamps, and the floating plant on the Tarawera River was laid up. Maintenance dredging by two dredges, and hand maintenance and improvements, were carried on throughout the area.

The season experienced was similar in most respects to that of the previous year. No flooding of any consequence occurred during the winter, and the summer was again exceptionally dry. The country generally seems to have dried out more rapidly and thoroughly than previously with the advent of the dry weather, and this year even the lower lands were somewhat detrimentally affected by the long dry spell.

The area is more than keeping pace with the general increase in dairying products, as is evidenced by the fact that the Rangitaiki Plains Dairy Co. manufactured a total of 1,934 tons of butter, as compared with 1,558 tons during the past season, representing an increase of almost 25 per cent. The Tarawera Cheese-factory manufactured 243 tons—last year's total being 300 tons—the decrease being due to the deflection of some suppliers to the dairy company.

During the past two seasons there has been a marked improvement in the quality of the dairy stock, and some exceptional returns have been made by individual herds. There is no question that the bulk of the Rangitaiki Plains is very suitable for dairying, healthy for stock, and capable of giving an ample yield of the necessary winter feed. This year large quantities of hay and ensilage have been saved on the area, the last-named being somewhat of an innovation in this locality.

The commencement of a through railway service during the year is being taken full advantage of for the rapid freighting of cattle, sheep, and dairy-produce, and the bringing-in at reduced rates of the manures of which this area stands in great need.