

working the dredge alternately in the Railway and Pouarua Canals very satisfactory progress has been made, and it is anticipated that after allowing a period of a few months for consolidation of the country it will be possible to complete the upper 94 chains of the Pouarua Canal, remove dam at Ngatea West Road, and deepen the lower section of the canal, 4 m. 66 ch. in length, which has become impassable for coal-barges. This has caused some difficulty in supplying the dredge with fuel, which had to be carted over soft peat for a distance of over a mile. The dredge excavated 81,600 cubic yards during the year at average cost of 8·10d. per cubic yard.

No. 28 Bay City dragline excavator, after completing a large volume of useful work enlarging drains that would have been difficult and costly jobs to carry out by manual labour, was transferred to the Rangitaiki works on the 29th March. This machine was used to deepen the Mangawhero Road drain for a distance of 328 chains. When the material removed from the drain was suitable it was used for ballasting the road, which has a peat subgrade, and sufficient gravel was removed from the upper end of the drain to surface the road for a distance of 156 chains. The quantity excavated during the year was 29,300 cubic yards at a cost of 6·72d. per cubic yard.

CENTRAL DISTRICT.

River-improvement work has been the principal construction activity in this district. Four dredges have been operating on a reach of seven and a half miles, completing stop-banks and enlarging the river-channel. The Torehape Tramway has been repaired, sleepers renewed, and loop-lines constructed preparatory to commencing the ballasting of Centre Road; 6,052 sleepers have been cut for additional tram-line and the rolling-stock repaired. Parties of workmen have been employed spraying and grubbing blackberry on flax plantations, sowing grass-seed, and ring-barking willows. Some 1,987 chains of drains were cleaned in this district, including 500 chains in the Orongo Settlement. The Kerepechi-Kaihere Road was resurfaced for a distance of 216 chains. The river ferry service at Kaihere has been maintained during the year. The depot at Kerepechi is the centre at which all goods and materials are received and despatched to the various jobs, and all repairs to machinery and plant are carried out in the workshops at Kerepechi.

PATETONGA DISTRICT.

The Patetonga Riding roads metalling scheme, comprising the metalling and improvement of 9½ miles of roadway commenced in 1929, was completed in July. During the year under review 1,674 cubic yards of metal was laid on the Patetonga main roads, and 919 cubic yards of metal was quarried and spread on the Patetonga Landing Road. Some 1,440 cubic yards of clay ballast was delivered along the last-mentioned road by tramway. This tramway was afterwards removed and the material transported to Torehape to be used for ballasting peat road in the Pouarua Block. For surfacing 156 chains of the Mangawhero Road 1,335 cubic yards of gravel was used, and the roadway was widened with the material won from the road drain. A party of four men was employed during the summer ring-barking willows on the Piako River, above Patetonga, and cutting and hauling logs required for sleepers and general construction purposes from the bush on the banks of the Waitoa River. Drains to a length of 2,566 chains were cleaned and 19,300 cubic yards of material excavated in widening and deepening 362 chains of existing drains. Systematic attention has been given to the maintenance of the reconstructed and newly metalled roads. Throughout the year a Priestman dredge has been operating in the Piako River deepening the channel above Patetonga Wharf.

AWAITI DISTRICT.

The work in this district has been principally connected with the development of Koromatua Block, an area of 941 acres of Crown land adjoining the Otway Settlement. The block has been subdivided into six sections. The formation of 135 chains of access road is completed, and also the primary construction of a drainage system that will be progressively improved as the land consolidates. As the converting of raw swamp land of this kind into pasture is an undertaking that can only be carried out by the settler possessing a considerable amount of capital, it has been decided, before offering this land for selection, to fence four sections and sow an area of each with grass-seed after cultivation and treatment with manure. By the end of March 232 acres had been cultivated with swamp ploughs and tractors, disks, harrows, and roller, 50 acres had been sown in grass, 164 acres cleared of scrub, 162 chains of fence erected, and 15,631 cubic yards excavated in the construction of 501 chains of new drains. At the northern end of the Awaitei district 1 mile 70 chains of new road-formation was completed and 60 chains partly completed. Some 298 chains of existing drains were widened and deepened. The formation and metalling of 75 chains of road in the Wairakau Block, near Te Aroha, was carried out during the first quarter of the year, and 940 cubic yards of crushed river-gravel was used for surfacing this road.

WAITAKARURU DISTRICT.

In addition to the works connected with the Miranda drainage scheme previously mentioned, the principal undertakings in this district have been the construction of the Pouarua Canal, the clearing of 180 acres of scrub in Sections 38, 40, and 42, Block IV, Piako Survey District, preparatory to burning and surface sowing, the excavation of 5,069 cubic yards in the improvement of 162 chains of drains, construction of 206 chains of field drains requiring 3,112 cubic yards of excavation, and the cleaning of 2,625 chains of drains for maintenance purposes.