

Operating from a camp on the Awaiti Canal, a working-party of fourteen to twenty-seven men has been engaged throughout the year on land-development work on the Kerepeehi Extension Block, 368 chains of new drains have been constructed involving 7,740 cubic yards of excavation, also a considerable amount of drain cleaning and improvement, clearing approximately 400 acres of manuka, and grubbing about 120 acres of rushes. Another party of nine to twenty-two men camped at Kaihere Ferry have been engaged on the eradication of noxious weeds on the Kerepeehi Block and the flax area adjoining the Piako River. One hardwood bridge of 28 ft. span on pile abutments has been erected on the Kerepeehi Block Extension outlet. Difficulty experienced in obtaining adequate supplies of metal has delayed progress on road-metalling undertakings; 150 cubic yards of surface metal has been spread on 13 chains of Finlay's Road, Kerepeehi Block, and a surface-course of 1,546 cubic yards of metal has been laid on Wanis Road over a base-course laid last year; 176 chains of road-formation was completed on the Netherton-Tirohia Road, which has now been formed for a total distance of approximately three miles southwards from the Netherton Settlement. Maintenance-work carried out in this district includes seasonal drain-cleaning of 26 miles 74 chains of main drains. On account of the increasing volume of work being undertaken beyond the boundaries of the Hauraki Plains District, the staff in the workshops and store at Kerepeehi have had a particularly busy year. The control of 6 miles 57 chains of metalled roads and 1 mile 77 chains of unmetalled road was handed over to the Hauraki Plains County Council during the year. These roads were originally constructed, and have hitherto been maintained, by the Department in consequence of a provision of the Hauraki Plains Act giving exemption from general county rates to Hauraki Plains lands for a period of five years from date of occupation.

WAITAKARURU-TOREHAPE DISTRICT.

Two camps for men recruited from relief-of-unemployment agencies established in the Waitakaruru District some three years ago for fifty and twenty-five men respectively have been considerably below strength throughout the year. Fourteen to forty-nine men from one camp at Waitakaruru Township have been employed raising the stop-banks on the Waitakaruru Stream; 14,430 cubic yards of material have been placed by means of wheel-barrows, to raise 75 chains of stop-banks. Nine to twenty-five men from the other camp situated on the Maukoro Canal have been employed on drainage and development-work on Crown lands; 11,066 cubic yards of spoil was excavated in improving 169 chains of drains.

In the Torehape District a camp was established in February, 1932, for the purpose of continuing road-construction commenced some years previously within a block of 11,000 acres of Crown land. Owing to the number of men in this camp being reduced below that required to operate the tramway used for road-formation, this work had to be stopped in June, 1935, and the available men have since been employed on drain-improvements and noxious-weed eradication. The road-formation consists of clay ballast conveyed by light railway and laid on peat subgrade. During the many years that the work has been in progress intermittently, about eight miles of tramway has been laid. As the sleepers are of non-durable timber, every year's delay in the completion of the works necessitates the renewal of several thousands of sleepers, and the early resumption of work on at least the Torehape and Centre Roads now under construction cannot be too strongly urged. A total of 2,459 sleepers for the light railway were split at Patetonga, and 20 chains of line laid. Only 1,141 cubic yards of clay ballast was hauled on the tramway. In the construction of 19 chains of new drains and improvement of 373 chains of existing drains in this district, 18,549 cubic yards of material was excavated by manual labour and 40 miles 71 chains of drains were cleaned during the year.

PATETONGA DISTRICT.

Drain-improvement work was the principal undertaking carried out in this district during the past year. This work has been carried out by a working-party of nine to twenty-two men camped at Patetonga Township; 7,320 cubic yards was excavated in the improvement of 394 chains of drains, and 35 miles 56 chains of main drains were cleaned.

The ring-barking of the willows on the banks of the Piako and Waitoa Rivers, commenced last year, was continued during the months of January, February, and March, 1936, when a party of six men ring-barked the willows on a 3 miles 13 chains reach of the Piako River above the Patetonga Canal and inspected and, where necessary, treated with poison the willows on a ten-mile reach of the Piako River that had been ring-barked last year. Another party of six men commenced work in January, 1936, with a log-hauler snagging and clearing the growth from the banks of the Piako River above the Tahuna Bridge, and the clearing of one bank for a distance of 1 mile 44 chains had been completed at the end of March.

Fifty-six white-pine logs were cut in the bush on the Waitoa River and shipped to Kerepeehi for excavator pads and for general construction.

STRUCTURAL WORKS.

The chief structural undertaking completed during the year was the Kerepeehi Block pumping-station. The steel-frame pump-house building and pumping-machinery were erected on foundations completed in 1934-35. The 33 in. centrifugal pump is operated by a 90 h.p. motor. The equipment includes 85 kva. transformer switch-gear and electrically operated air-exhauster for priming-pump.

Five small road bridges were constructed over drains and canals, and a number of road culverts installed, including a 4-ft.-diameter culvert and flood-gate on the Maukoro Canal at Waitakaruru.

Two cottages were erected at Mill Road, near Paeroa.