

FARM-LAND DEVELOPMENT AND BUILDINGS.

For some time past a considerable amount of land-development and other works outside the Hauraki Plains District has been controlled from the Kerepehi headquarters. This year's undertakings include a small-farm land-development scheme near Cambridge, where a small working-party has been engaged stumping and ploughing and sowing in grass or other crops an area of 40 acres, also draining, fencing, cutting, and grubbing gorse and blackberry.

At Hoe-o-Tainui a party of eleven men has been engaged since August, 1935, preparing a block of 1,400 acres of Crown land for settlement. Two hundred and eighty-six acres have been cleared, ploughed, and cultivated with the Department's teams, and at the end of March, 1936, 72 acres had been sown in grass and treated with lime and manure.

A camp to accommodate twenty-four men was erected on Henderson's Block, near Otorohanga, in January, 1936, but only two men were employed attending to stock prior to the middle of March, when three more men were engaged by the Unemployment Relief agencies. The work carried out comprised repairs to fences and buildings and mowing ragwort.

SURVEYS AND OFFICE WORK.

Engineering surveys carried out during the year required 29 miles 62 chains of traverses, 63 miles 41 chains of levels, and 779 cross-sections. By means of automatic gauges, continuous river-stage records have been kept throughout the winter months at four gauging-stations on the Piako River and one station on the Waitoa River. Stream-flow measurements were carried out to test the discharge curves for the Waitoa River station and the upper station of the Piako River.

The work carried out by the field and office staff merits special mention. This work comprises preparation of plans and specifications, contract and wages vouchers, payment of wages, allocation of works expenditure, keeping of store accounts, and general office work. In addition to monthly payments to standard workers and contractors, one hundred and fifty to two hundred men are paid fortnightly, and as the works are spread over a large area this involves a considerable amount of extra travelling and long working-hours for the staff.

SUMMARY.

The total length of subsidiary drains constructed on the Hauraki Plains since the inception of the scheme is now 773 miles 68 chains. The principal works carried out during the year under review are summarized in the following schedule:—

	Length. M. Ch.	Excavation. Cubic Yd.
Drains cleaned by manual labour	107 26	..
Drains widened and deepened by manual labour	11 71	25,868
Drains, new construction, by manual labour	6 4	9,715
Stop-banks enlarged by manual labour	1 15	14,687
Total quantity of drainage excavation by manual labour	..	50,270
River and canal improvement, machine construction	3 74	164,046
Roads metalled, top-course only	2 22	Metal. 1,696
New roads formed	2 16	..
Clay ballast delivered on peat road by light railway	..	Ballast. 1,141
Sleepers cut and delivered for tramway	..	No. 2,459
Area cleared of scrub and rushes	..	Acres. 520
Willows ring-barked on river-banks	3 13	..
Road bridges erected	..	No. 5
35 ft. span rolled-steel joist, pile abutments, timber decking.		
25 ft. span timber joists, pile abutments, timber decking.		
25 ft. sill bridge, hardwood.		
20 ft. sill bridge, hardwood.		
14 ft. sill bridge, hardwood.		
Road culverts and floodgates constructed	..	5

The works expenditure totalled £27,445 19s. 10d. Drainage rates for maintenance purposes were struck for £1,558 0s. 11d., whilst £1,889 14s. 11d. were collected.

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R. G. MACMORRAN, Chief Drainage Engineer.

The Under-Secretary for Lands, Wellington.