

The following table shows the quantities excavated by the dredges during the past seventeen years, with the average unit cost for each year:—

Year.	Cubic Yards.	Cost per Cubic Yard.
1921-22	246,022	7·29d.
1922-23	440,092	8·20d.
1923-24	508,654	7·27d.
1924-25	822,286	5·86d.
1925-26	856,653	6·32d.
1926-27	647,182	7·42d.
1927-28	652,413	7·32d.
1928-29	619,911	6·54d.
1929-30	595,565	6·25d.
1930-31	536,692	8·32d.
1931-32	390,611	7·99d.
1932-33	200,954	8·00d.
1933-34	116,224	5·96d.
1934-35	52,517	10·02d.
1935-36	164,046	8·26d.
1936-37	171,717	8·69d.
1937-38	261,347	5·72d.

KEREPEEHI-AWAITI DISTRICT.

With a view to reducing the cost of cleaning drains, a weed-cutting launch was used experimentally in some of the large machine-dug drains in this district last autumn; 3 miles 43 chains of drain-cleaning was carried out by this method, at about two-thirds the cost of cleaning by manual labour. A total length of 7 miles 31 chains of drains were cleaned by hand. The metalling of Wani Road was completed, 1,932 cubic yards of metal being used for resurfacing road for a distance of 200 chains southwards from Wairou Road and laying two courses of metal along 52 chains of road between Awaite West and Pukahu Road intersections.

A camp established in 1934 to accommodate twenty to thirty men employed on drainage, roading, clearing scrub, and general land-development work on the Kerepeehi Extension Block was closed in November and the men transferred to other work. The land is now showing rapid response to drainage. Fair pasture has been established in the alluvial soil, and a large area of shallow peat is now in grass. To hasten consolidation, arrangements are being made to systematically stock a peat area of 1,100 acres. Four to eight men have been continuously employed on the Kerepeehi Extension Block clearing 393 acres of blackberry, scrub, and rushes, constructing 257 chains of field drains (7,710 cubic yards of excavation), and controlling noxious weeds. The metalling of the Awaite Canal Left Embankment Road, commenced last year, was completed for a distance of 140 chains; 100 chains of the Reservoir Canal Road was also metalled, and the total quantity of metal spread on these two roads was 4,281 cubic yards. Extensive alterations have been made to the office, depot, and yards at Kerepeehi. The workshop staffs have been busily employed on building, construction, and maintenance, and repairs to plant and machinery. The Piako River ferry service has been in continuous operation at Kaihere.

WAITAKARURU AND TOREHAPE DISTRICTS.

Activities in these districts have been connected principally with the development of the Pouarua Block, an area of 11,000 acres of peat land on which intermittent development-work has been in progress over a number of years. As the result of a recent decision, a progressive scheme for the development of this area has been planned in detail, and includes not only drainage and roading, but also grassing, fencing, and stocking. The scheme marks an important advance in the method in preparing peat lands of the Hauraki Plains for settlement. Experience has shown that the peat, after an initial response to drainage, goes through a period of suspended development. Time is required for the formation of soil by the decomposition of the peat, and during this period the carrying-capacity of the land is uncertain. These variable conditions have in the past proved a real difficulty to the early settlers striving to improve sections of suitable area for farming when fully productive. Future hardship will now be avoided by large-scale State development, with the necessary control of stock continued until the land has reached a stage approaching stable production. Two main camps are provided for the men engaged on this work, one at Torehape, the other three miles from Waitakaruru Township. Each has accommodation for thirty to forty men. Smaller camps for six to eight men have been established during the year at the junction of the Waikumete Stream with the Maukoro Canal, on Pitts Road, and on Orchard West Road. Two working-parties operating from houseboats have been engaged on the southern portion of the Pouarua Area. The works carried out on the co-operative contract principle comprise the excavation of 58,257 cubic yards of material in widening and deepening 2,882 chains of existing drains, and 29,496 cubic yards of excavation in construction of 863 chains of new drains. An area of 560 acres of scrub was cleared near Waitakaruru, and this area will be burnt and sown in grass this autumn and should be ready for light stock next spring. For road-construction in the Pouarua Block 16,420 cubic yards of clay ballast has been hauled by light railway an average distance of five miles from the pit at Torehape for ballasting the peat subgrades of Central and Torehape Roads; 5,630 fascines were laid; and 932 willow sleepers cut on the banks of the Piako River were used for laying 54 chains of light railway. The formation of a peat section of the Orchard West Road, one mile in length, from the Pouarua Canal eastwards was commenced in January, 1938, and to date 3,085 cubic yards of clay ballast has been delivered with motor-trucks along 25 chains of this