

The removal of willows from the Rangitaiki River was carried forward, a heavy tractor being employed with excellent results during the latter portion of the year. This work, together with the constant channel-improvement that is taking place, has had a decided effect on the flood-capacity of the river.

Improvement-work was carried on in the Waioho Stream, and maintenance dredging of the canal outlet for the stream will be carried out when the Monighan dredge is available. This work will not, as anticipated by some settlers, have any material effect on the flood-level in this area, as this is governed entirely by the level of the Whakatane River.

The area has made substantial progress during the year and this is reflected by an increase in the manufacture of butter. The Rangitaiki Plains Dairy Co., situated centrally in the area, manufactured a total of 4,793 tons, an increase of 941 tons over the total of last year. The Arawa Dairy Co., which drew a portion of its supply from the Plains, was closed down during the year, its supply being distributed among the adjoining factories.

The flax companies, who have considerable holdings of the lower lands on the Plains, made very little progress with development. Unfortunately, these areas in their now undrained state seriously affect the drainage of the adjoining farm lands.

Considerable attention has been given to the improvement of the drainage of low-lying areas by the installation of flood-pumps. There are now eighteen such pumps of varying capacities, and the installation of several more is contemplated. Excellent results are in most cases being obtained, and there is no question that this area lends itself ideally to this form of auxiliary drainage.

Rainfall.—The rainfall for the year totalled 57.99 in. falling on 108 days. The wettest month was February with a fall of 15.43 in., and the driest October with a fall of 1.54 in. The average rainfall for the past twenty years was 53 in.

Maintenance.—The hand drains throughout the area were maintained in good order, the bulk of the work being done by competitive contract. A new weed-cutting launch was purchased during the year, and this was employed in removing the weed-growth from several lengths of canal. Certain canals are maintained annually by hand, and this work and the clearing and maintenance of flood-gates and stop-banks in the area was carried out this year.

Rangitaiki River.—The improvement of the channel of the Rangitaiki River by the removal of willows and obstructions was proceeded with throughout the year, and this work will be continued in the coming year. If favourable conditions obtain, the channel of this river will be straightened through the sandspit at the mouth this winter.

Tarawera River.—The placing of stone groynes near the mouth of this river was completed, a total of 2,946 cubic yards of heavy rock being quarried and carted into position.

The inspection and protection from erosion of sections of the Upper Tarawera River was carried out as required.

Dredges.—Three dredges were in commission during the year. The light Bay City dredge was engaged in drain-improvement work and covered a distance of 188½ chains, removing 21,596 cubic yards of spoil.

The Bay City drag-line was engaged in raising and widening the Tarawera River east stop-bank. The distance dredged during the year was 216 chains, 70,915 cubic yards of spoil being lifted from the river-bed and deposited on the existing stop-bank.

Monighan No. 17 drag-line commenced maintenance dredging in June on Reid's Central drain and worked northwards on this canal. A section of very heavy willow-growth on the canal-bank was removed in conjunction with this work and this delayed excavation work considerably. The distance covered during the year was 174 chains, 62,254 cubic yards of spoil being moved.

Drains in Operation.—The total length of drains constructed by the Department or taken over for maintenance purposes is as follows:—

						Miles.	Ch.
Dredge canals	..	..	..	..	..	68	28
Main outfall drains	..	..	..	..	..	121	9
Road drains	..	..	..	..	..	30	46

Of these, 112 miles 32 chains are maintained annually by the Department, whilst the growth is removed by hand.

Plant and Machinery.—This consists of two Priestman dredges, two Bay City drag-lines, one Bay City dipper, one Monighan drag-line, one oil-launch, one coal-punt, and two small boats.

Summary of Work done—

					Miles.	Ch.	Cubic Yd.
Drains cleared by hand	..	..	..	..	111	40	
Canals cleared by hand	..	..	..	..	14	70	
Drains deepened by hand	..	..	..	..	4	40	5,700
Spoil dredged	..	..	..	..	7	18	154,765
Stop-banks repaired and raised by hand	..	..	..	..	0	18	2,156
Canals cleared by weed-cutter	..	..	..	..	21	74	
Boulder groynes erected	..	..	..	..	0	20	2,946
Cottages erected	..	..	..	..	2		
Store sheds	..	..	..	..	1		

I have, &c.,

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