

Form 7  
Notice of appeal to Environment Court against decision  
on proposed policy statement or plan

*Clause 14(1) of First Schedule, Resource Management Act 1991*

To The Registrar  
Environment Court  
Auckland, Wellington, and Christchurch

I, Vaughan Henry, appeal against a decision (*or* part of a decision) of Timaru District Council on the following policy statement (*or* plan):

SASM 4A.

*I am not a trade competitor for section 308D of the act*

I made a submission on that policy statement (*or* plan).

I received notice of the decision on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2026.

The decision was made by Timaru District Council.

The decision (*or* part of the decision) that I am appealing is:

- *SAMA overly will remain on our property*
- *Proposed Timaru District Plan, Decision Part 6, Cultural Values, Sites of Significance to Maori, Historic Heritage and Notable Trees 19<sup>th</sup> March 2026.*

The reasons for the appeal are as follows:

Commissioners failed to follow up as they stated after the hearing and relied solely on Aoraki Environmental Consulting version of events

I see the following relief:

Remove SASM 4A from our property.

I attach the following documents\* to this notice:

- (a) a copy of my submission *or* further submission (with a copy of the submission opposed or supported by my further submission):
- (b) a copy of the relevant decision (*or* part of the decision):
- (c) any other documents necessary for an adequate understanding of the appeal:
- (d) a list of names and addresses of persons to be served with a copy of this notice.

\* These documents must be attached and lodged with the notice in the Environment Court. The appellant does not need to attach a copy of a regional or district plan or policy statement. In addition, the appellant does not need to attach copies of the submission and decision to the copies of the notice served on other persons if the copy served lists these documents and states that copies may be obtained, on request, from the appellant.

*Henry*  
.....  
Signature of appellant  
(or person authorised to sign  
on behalf of appellant)

*21-4-26*  
.....

Date

Address: *249 Kereta Road Seaview*

Telephone: *021 463 911*

Fax/email: *vhenry@farmside.co.nz*

Contact person:

### **Note to appellant**

You must lodge the original and 1 copy of this notice with the Environment Court within 30 working days of being served with notice of the decision to be appealed. The notice must be signed by you or on your behalf. You must pay the filing fee required by regulation 35 of the Resource Management (Forms, Fees, and Procedure) Regulations 2003.

You must serve a copy of this notice on the local authority that made the decision and on the Minister of Conservation (if the appeal is on a regional coastal plan), within 30 working days of being served with a notice of the decision.

You must also serve a copy of this notice on every person who made a submission to which the appeal relates within 5 working days after the notice is lodged with the Environment Court.

Within 10 working days after lodging this notice, you must give written notice to the Registrar of the Environment Court of the name, address, and date of service for each person served with this notice.

However, you may apply to the Environment Court under section 281 of the Resource Management Act 1991 for a waiver of the above timing or service requirements (*see* Form 38).

### **Advice to recipients of copy of notice of appeal**

#### *How to become party to proceedings*

You may be a party to the appeal if you made a submission on the matter of this appeal and you lodge a notice of your wish to be a party to the proceedings (in Form 33) with the Environment Court within 30 working days after this notice was lodged with the Environment Court.

You may apply to the Environment Court under section 281 of the Resource Management Act 1991 for a waiver of the above timing requirements (*see* Form 38).

**IN THE MATTER OF**      Resource Management Act 1991

**AND**

**IN THE MATTER OF**      Proposed Timaru District Plan

---

**Decision Report – Part 6**

**Cultural Values, Sites of Significance to Māori, Historic Heritage and Notable Trees**

**19 March 2026**

---

COPY

13 October, 1993

The General Manager  
Timaru District Council  
PO Box 522  
TIMARU

Attention: Planning Department

Dear Sir,

Application for Subdivision Consent  
Rural Section 37728 - Block VI Arowhenua SD  
C.T.23A/187 WJ & JA Hutchison  
Beach Road Seadown

General: Mr and Mrs Hutchison wish to subdivide their property in the manner shown on the attached plans. Lots 1 & 2 are to be retained and farmed by Mr and Mrs Hutchison.

In addition the Hutchisons desire to create a Rural Living Allotment around their home and existing buildings shown as Lot 1. This Lot 1 and Lot 3 have been inspected for drainage purposes by Mr Polson, Timaru District Council Health official.

We understand that Mr Polson inspected both Lots 1 & 3 when an excavator was on site to test the subsoil. Mr Polson recommends that Lot 1 have an area of 2 hectares for drainage purposes.

Subsoil testing was also carried out on Lot 3 and it was found that the northern portion of Lot 3 is suitable for building and drainage.

Lot 3 is to be sold to Mr and Mrs Weavers, daughter and son-in-law of the Hutchisons.

Lot 3 has an area of 10 hectares and as such meets the minimum area requirements for an allotment in the Rural 1 Zone as described in the Strathallan District Scheme. This Lot 3 and Lot 2 are to be used for farming purposes and separate letters from our clients detail the farming intentions. It is evident that raising calves is an intense and time demanding business. The advantage of having two families together to assist one another is very evident in their letters.

Topography: The overall property is generally flat and is intersected by drainage ditches. Historically this farming area was very swampy and the drainage pattern resulted in drained land being very suitable for cattle and dairying.

A large man made drainage ditch is on the boundary between Lots 2 and 3. This ditch has been enlarged over the years by cleaning operations carried out by Canterbury Regional Council. Both the present owners and officers of Canterbury Regional Council agree that this drainage ditch is man made and is essential for the ongoing drainage of the land in the immediate area.

It should also be noted that this same drainage ditch is used as an overflow channel from the Levels Plain Irrigation system and provides an essential outlet for excess irrigation water.

In summary we believe that there are no waterways on the farm that could be affected by requirements of the Resource Management Act.

#### Flooding

A copy of this plan and report has been supplied to Canterbury Regional Council requesting a report on the risk of any potential flooding on the area of subdivision.

#### Power and Telecom Services

Both Power and Telecom services are available from Beach Road for a new dwelling on Lot 3. The farm buildings on Lot 1 are connected to these services.

#### Domestic Water

There is no piped water scheme in the area and the land draws water from an underground supply.

The same situation will apply for Lot 3 and it will be necessary for Mr and Mrs Weavers to apply for the right for a water bore from Canterbury Regional Council.

#### Stormwater

Stormwater from any future buildings on Lot 3 can be dispersed into the existing underground and open drains on the property.

#### Sewer Drainage

Sewer drainage from Lot 1 is dispersed from a septic tank and the Hutchisons advise that their septic tank is working satisfactorily. Plans for the new house to be

built on Lot 3 will show a suitable sewer disposal system.

Corner Widening

Lot 4 is shown as "Land to Vest as Road" and is the standard 6 metre X 6 metre requirement.

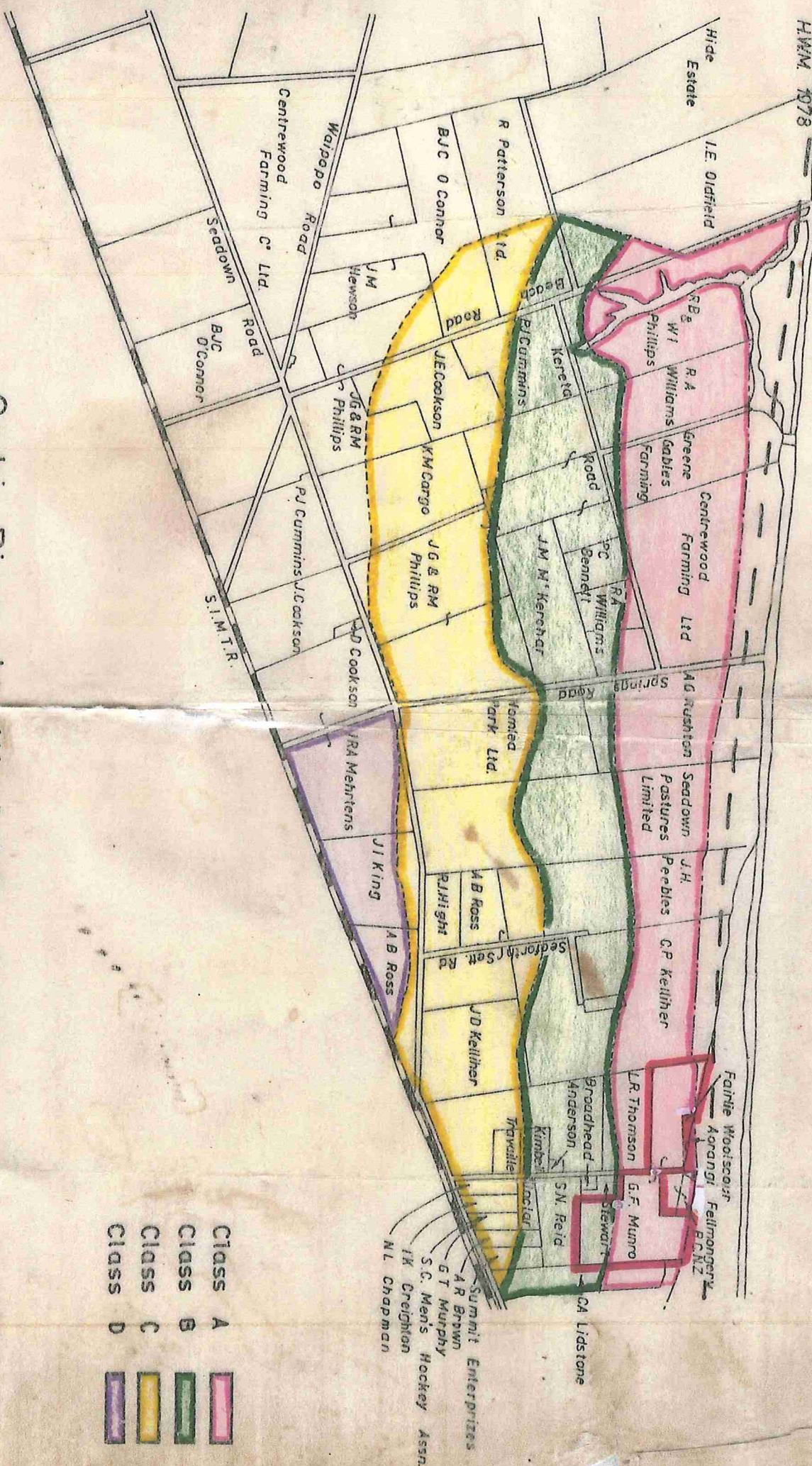
We enclose application for Resource Consent, copies of plans, copy of title, clients submissions and our cheque for \$160 being the subdivision consent fee.

Yours faithfully,  
COWAN HOLMES & BROWNIE

Per :

H/M 1865  
H/M 1978

SOUTH PACIFIC OCEAN



- Class A
- Class B
- Class C
- Class D

Ophi River to Washdyke Lagoon  
Coastal Stopbank and Land Drainage  
Land Classification

*M. Huxley*  
Engineer

13/5/68

# Submission on Notified Proposal for Plan, Change or Variation

Clause 6 of Schedule 1, Resource Management Act 1991

To: Timaru District Council

Name of submitter:

Deborah Moxle Beattie  
[State full name]

This is a submission on the following proposed plan or on a change proposed to the following plan or on the following proposed variation to a proposed plan or on the following proposed variation to a change to an existing plan (the 'proposal'):

SASM - 4a Wahi Taoka, Wahi Tapu  
[State the name of proposed or existing plan and (where applicable) change or variation].

~~I could/could not\* gain an advantage in trade competition through this submission.~~  
[\*Select one.]

~~\*I am/am not† directly affected by an effect of the subject matter of the submission that—~~

- ~~(a) adversely affects the environment; and~~
- ~~(b) does not relate to trade competition or the effects of trade competition.~~

~~[\*Delete or strike through entire paragraph if you could not gain an advantage in trade competition through this submission.]~~

~~[†Select one.]~~

The specific provisions of the proposal that my submission relates to are: [Give details]

drainage ditch on our property

My submission is: [Include whether you support or oppose the specific provisions or wish to have them amended; and reasons for your views]

[If your submission relates to a proposed plan prepared or changed using the collaborative planning process, you must indicate the following:

- Where you consider that the proposed plan or change fails to give effect to a consensus position and therefore how it should be modified; or
- In the case that your submission addresses a point on which the collaborative group did not reach a consensus position, how that provision in the plan should be modified.]

oppose - the area stated on our property is a man made drain is exempt from RMA, there is no rock in the drain, so is unlikely to be rock art, is unlikely to be a burial site - can not possibly be a cancer marking site as it never existed

historic drainage plan of area - regional councils info provided

the historic map also shows that drainage in the area was never open to the sea

I seek the following decision from the local authority: *[Give precise details as this is the only part of your submission that will be summarised in the summary of decisions requested]*

this must be removed from district plan, clearly & correctly entered into council records for future reference

remove Wahi Tanaka & Wahi Tapu from our property

I wish ~~(or do not wish)~~ to be heard in support of my submission.

*[\*In the case of a submission made on a proposed planning instrument that is subject to a streamlined planning process, you need only indicate whether you wish to be heard if the direction specifies that a hearing will be held.]*

*[\*Select one.]*

\*If others make a similar submission, I will consider presenting a joint case with them at a hearing.

*[\*Delete if you would not consider presenting a joint case.]*

*UHenry*

Signature of submitter (or person authorised to sign on behalf of submitter)

*[A signature is not required if you make your submission by electronic means]*

Date *7-12-22*

Electronic address for service of submitter: *uhenry@farmside.co.nz*

Telephone: *03 6887028*

Postal address (or alternative method of service under s352 of the Act): *249 Kereta Road Seadown*

Contact person: *[name and designation, if applicable]* *Daughan Henry*

**Note to person making submission**

1. If you are making a submission to the Environmental Protection Authority, you should use form 16B. If you are a person who could gain an advantage in trade competition through the submission, your right to make a submission may be limited by clause 6(4) of Part 1 of Schedule 1 of the Resource Management Act 1991.
2. Please note that your submission (or part of your submission) may be struck out if the authority is satisfied that at least 1 of the following applies to the submission (or part of the submission):
  - It is frivolous or vexatious;
  - It discloses no reasonable or relevant case;
  - It would be an abuse of the hearing process to allow the submission (or the part) to be taken further;
  - It contains offensive language;
  - It is supported only by material that purports to be independent expert evidence, but has been prepared by a person who is not independent or who does not have sufficient specialist knowledge or skill to give expert advice on the matter.

# Submission on Notified Proposal for Plan, Change or Variation

Clause 6 of Schedule 1, Resource Management Act 1991

To: Timaru District Council

Name of submitter:

Deborah Merle Beattie  
[State full name]

This is a submission on the following proposed plan or on a change proposed to the following plan or on the following proposed variation to a proposed plan or on the following proposed variation to a change to an existing plan) (the 'proposal'):

SASM - 4a  
[State the name of proposed or existing plan and (where applicable) change or variation].

I could/could not\* gain an advantage in trade competition through this submission.  
[\*Select one.]

\*I am/am not† directly affected by an effect of the subject matter of the submission that—  
(a) adversely affects the environment; and  
(b) does not relate to trade competition or the effects of trade competition.

[\*Delete or strike through entire paragraph if you could not gain an advantage in trade competition through this submission.]  
[†Select one.]

The specific provisions of the proposal that my submission relates to are: [Give details]

area listed as SASM 4a

My submission is: [Include whether you support or oppose the specific provisions or wish to have them amended; and reasons for your views]

[If your submission relates to a proposed plan prepared or changed using the collaborative planning process, you must indicate the following:

- Where you consider that the proposed plan or change fails to give effect to a consensus position and therefore how it should be modified; or
- In the case that your submission addresses a point on which the collaborative group did not reach a consensus position, how that provision in the plan should be modified.]

Oppose  
this area is a man made drain - was never open to the sea, there is a man made concrete outlet in the stopbank that was used until approx 1963. It was then dug out alongside the stopbank to meet up with the Washdyke Lagoon as an outlet to sea. The concrete outlet is still there today, it was stopped being used as it did get work and would block up with gravel in rough sea. The outlet was manually put there so the water from the drained land could get out to sea. These are all man made - of the drain itself, concrete outlet - later connection to Washdyke Lagoon.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**I seek the following decision from the local authority:** *[Give precise details as this is the only part of your submission that will be summarised in the summary of decisions requested]*

Remove SFSM-102 as it is not natural, it is a man made drain and was never open to the sea

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**I wish ~~(or do not wish)~~ † to be heard in support of my submission.**

*[\*In the case of a submission made on a proposed planning instrument that is subject to a streamlined planning process, you need only indicate whether you wish to be heard if the direction specifies that a hearing will be held.]*

*[†Select one.]*

**\*If others make a similar submission, I will consider presenting a joint case with them at a hearing.**

*[\*Delete if you would not consider presenting a joint case.]*

*Henry*

**Signature of submitter (or person authorised to sign on behalf of submitter)**

*[A signature is not required if you make your submission by electronic means]*

Date 14-12-22

Electronic address for service of submitter: uhenry@farmside.co.nz

Telephone: 03 6857028

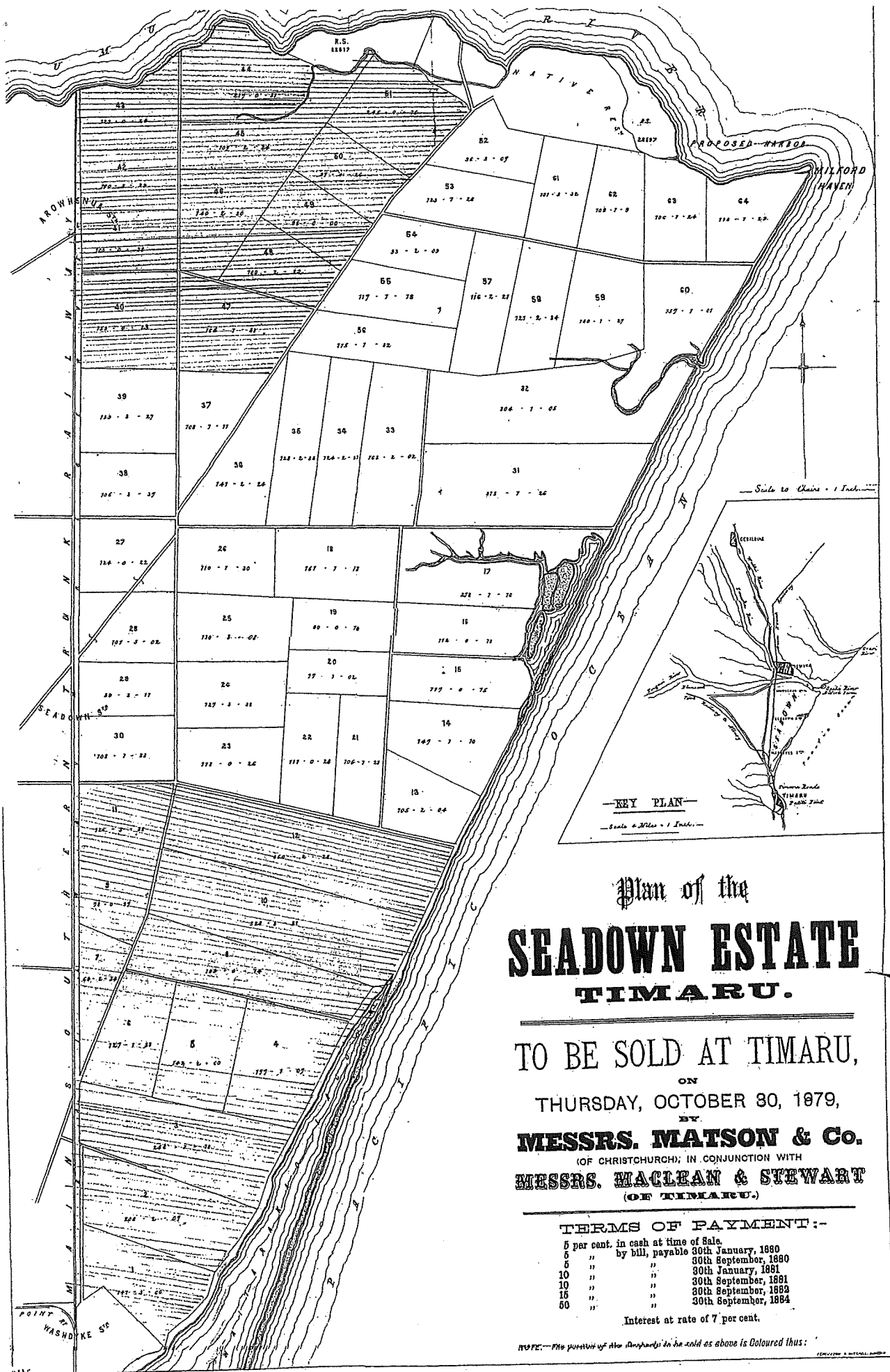
Postal address (or alternative method of service under s352 of the Act):  
249 Kereta Road Seadown

Contact person: *[name and designation, if applicable]*

*Vaughan Henry*

**Note to person making submission**

1. If you are making a submission to the Environmental Protection Authority, you should use form 16B. If you are a person who could gain an advantage in trade competition through the submission, your right to make a submission may be limited by clause 6(4) of Part 1 of Schedule 1 of the Resource Management Act 1991.
2. Please note that your submission (or part of your submission) may be struck out if the authority is satisfied that at least 1 of the following applies to the submission (or part of the submission):
  - It is frivolous or vexatious;
  - It discloses no reasonable or relevant case;
  - It would be an abuse of the hearing process to allow the submission (or the part) to be taken further;
  - It contains offensive language;
  - It is supported only by material that purports to be independent expert evidence, but has been prepared by a person who is not independent or who does not have sufficient specialist knowledge or skill to give expert advice on the matter.



Plan of the  
**SEADOWN ESTATE**  
**TIMARU.**

TO BE SOLD AT TIMARU,  
 ON  
 THURSDAY, OCTOBER 30, 1879,  
 BY  
**MESSRS. MATSON & Co.**  
 (OF CHRISTCHURCH); IN CONJUNCTION WITH  
**MESSRS. MACLEAN & STEWART**  
 (OF TIMARU.)

**TERMS OF PAYMENT:--**

5	per cent.	in cash at time of sale.
5	"	by bill, payable 30th January, 1880
10	"	" " 30th September, 1880
10	"	" " 30th January, 1881
10	"	" " 30th September, 1881
15	"	" " 30th September, 1882
50	"	" " 30th September, 1884

Interest at rate of 7 per cent.

NOTE:—The portion of the property to be sold as above is Coloured thus:—

Particulars and Conditions of Sale  
OF  
FREEHOLD LAND,

BEING PART OF THE SEADOWN ESTATE,

*Situate in the Timaru District, in the Provincial District of Canterbury.*

TO BE SOLD BY PUBLIC AUCTION,

On THURSDAY, 30th day of Oct., 1879,

AT MESSRS. MACLEAN & STEWART'S SALEROOMS, TIMARU,

BY

MESSRS. H. MATSON AND CO.

PARTICULARS.

- LOT 1.—All that Parcel of Land, containing by admeasurement 111 acres 3 roods (more or less), being part of Rural Sections numbered 4014, 7458, and 8330 on the map of the Chief Surveyor of the Provincial District of Canterbury, as the same is delineated on the sale plan thereof, hereunto annexed, and numbered 1 on the said plan.
- LOT 2.—All that Parcel of Land, containing by admeasurement 206 acres 2 roods 7 perches (more or less), being part of the Rural Sections numbered 4014 and 8330 on the said map of the said Chief Surveyor, as the same is delineated on the sale plan thereof, hereunto annexed, and numbered 2 on the said plan.
- LOT 3.—All that Parcel of Land, containing by admeasurement 256 acres 3 roods 18 perches (more or less), being part of the Rural Sections numbered 4014 and 8330 on the said map of the said Chief Surveyor, as the same is delineated on the sale plan thereof, hereunto annexed, and numbered 3 on the said plan.
- LOT 4.—All that Parcel of Land, containing by admeasurement 177 acres 1 rood 7 perches (more or less), being part of the Rural Sections numbered 3904, 4014, 8330 on the said map of the said Chief Surveyor, as the same is delineated on the sale plan thereof, hereunto annexed, and numbered 4 on the said plan.
- LOT 5.—All that Parcel of Land, containing by admeasurement 142 acres 2 roods (more or less), being part of Rural Sections numbered 3904, 4014, 8028, and 8330 on the said map of the said Chief Surveyor, as the same is delineated on the sale plan thereof, hereunto annexed, and numbered 5 on the said plan.

This article contains searchable text which was automatically generated and may contain errors. Join the community and correct any errors you spot to help us improve Papers Past.

Switch to [View correctable text](#) to explore this feature.

---

**LARGE GRANT**

**LARGE GRANT**

Timaru Herald, Volume CXLIV,  
Issue 21072, 25 June 1938, Page 8

### **Using this item**

Stuff Ltd is the copyright owner for the Timaru Herald. You can reproduce in-copyright material from this newspaper for non-commercial use under a [Creative](#)

[Commons Attribution-](#)

[NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0](#)

[International licence](#) (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0).

This newspaper is not available for commercial use without the consent of Stuff Ltd. For advice on reproduction of out-of-copyright material from this newspaper, please refer to the [Copyright guide](#).

# Minister Offers £8000

## For Drainage

### Scheme for Washdyke and Seadown

#### Serious Complaints

A grant of £8000 was offered by the Minister of Public Works (the Hon. R. Semple) yesterday, for a major scheme involving the drainage of the Lower Seadown district and the Washdyke lagoon area. The scheme, which was proposed some time ago, was estimated to cost £10,000, and the balance required will have to be found by the ratepayers affected and the Levels County Council. The Minister made the offer to a deputation of Seadown and Washdyke settlers, who complained that storm and spring water was being carried in five of the Levels irrigation races, and from dead-ends, was swamping their land. Mr Semple intimated that it was his desire that a start should be made on the scheme at once.

The deputation met the Minister near the Seadown School and conducted him to one of the dead-ends of an irrigation channel. When he saw the flooded ground, Mr Semple remarked that he was not going on to it as he was not a pukeko. Dealing with the history of the major drainage scheme for the area, he said the Government had originally offered a subsidy of £5000, and the ratepayers and the Levels County Council had been expected to find the rest. He asked if any agreement had been reached, and upon receiving a reply in the negative, inquired from the resident Public Works Engineer at Temuka (Mr T. G. Beck) how he intended to obviate the dead-ends.

Mr Beck stated that ditches would have to be run towards the coast, and permission would have to be obtained from property owners.

A member of the deputation: We are

only a lot of battlers, and we have enough difficulty in running a few cows to supply milk to the town. We should not be asked to pay anything for drainage.

Mr Beck remarked that the water had come from springs and from the surface, and was not connected with the irrigation water.

#### Ditch Blamed for Water

A voice: There was no water here until they dug this ditch.

The Minister: We have had a wet winter. There is no use arguing about who is responsible for the water being here. The thing is to get the job done. The Government should not be asked to find the whole of the cost. You can't tell me that the whole thing is caused by irrigation. If we did dump water on to an area, the onus would naturally be on us.

A voice: But we have never had water here before.

The Minister: I am getting down to finance; not to whether the ditch brought the water here or not. It is no use trying to tickle an elephant to death with a sandfly's whisker. I want to know who you can start on the job. I was born in a hurry, and I have been in a hurry ever since. I'll undertake to find £7500 if the Council and the ratepayers find the rest.

Mr J. Harris remarked that the highway would benefit, and that the Highways Board should be expected to make some contribution.

The Minister: You have to remember that it all comes out of the public purse.

A voice: If it costs more than the £10,000 estimated, will you find the additional money?

#### Will Stand by Estimate

The Minister: We will meet that. The estimate is ours, and we will find any additional money if it is needed. We want to get on to the major scheme. How are you going to find the balance? I want to get finality.

Mr C. E. Kerr said the chairman of the Levels County Council (Mr T. B. Garrick) had stated, when the scheme had been under consideration, that the Council would have no security for the payment of its share. It had been suggested that the Council should obtain

some security over the land.

Mr J. Harris: If the Council stuck its toes in, what would happen?

The Minister: I am not prepared to say.

Mr Harris: You can see how desperate the situation is.

In reply to the Minister, Mr Beck stated that employment would be provided for 25 men for nine months. Two drag-line scoops would really be needed.

The Minister stated that as there was only one machine in the district, another should be requisitioned. "I want this job started now; within the next fortnight or so," he said.

Mr Clyde Carr, M.P., said the settlers affected had not been able to get in machines to thresh their wheat, and the stacks were standing in water.

Several members of the deputation urged the Minister to use his influence with the Levels County Council to obtain a subsidy, and Mr Carr remarked that when the Council was next interviewed, a gun should be taken along. Other speakers dwelt on the difficulty in finding the money.

The Minister: We'll find £8000. (Applause).

Motions of thanks were proposed to the Minister and Mr Carr, by Mr Harris.

Last night, Mr Carr received a telegram from Mr Semple to the effect that after a conference with the Hon. H. T. Armstrong he had received advice that £3000 of the £8000 he had promised would be available from the employment promotion fund. Mr Semple asked Mr Carr to communicate with the Levels County Council and the rate-payers affected, asking them to find the £2000 required between them with all possible expedition, as he was anxious to start the work immediately.

# Troubles of the Seadown Settlers

At the end of 1936 the official opening of the Levels irrigation scheme in South Canterbury was held, though the water was not actually used at all extensively by farmers until the best part of a year later.

It was not so very long after the water for irrigation had been used fairly consistently that settlers on the old Seadown estate, which, roughly, occupies the country to the east of the main south railway line from a mile or so north of Washdyke to about Arowhenua in the north, began to notice that their land was getting a good deal wetter than it used to be and that water had begun to lie in small lakes in their paddocks, or some of them, upsetting completely the system of farming that had been successfully carried on for well over 60 years on this rich land estate, which has been renowned for well over half a century for its outstandingly good quality wheat crops.

The worse flooding occurred on the central and southern block of this Seadown country and not much trouble was caused nearer to Arowhenua. The men on Seadown very naturally became much alarmed at the state of affairs, as they saw their capital and perhaps their income vanishing, and during the past four years they have formed a committee which has engineered agitations, deputations to Ministers, petitions, meetings and the obvious and usual line taken by any body of people who want what they consider a wrong righted.

So far the effect has not been at all satisfactory to them, although the Public Works Department has certainly expended a very considerable sum of money in constructing drains, both large and smaller, through various properties on the Seadown designed to cure the trouble, or, at least, to mitigate it. But this well-meant effort had decidedly not had the desired effect and the Seadown farmers still need wet feet.

These victims maintain that the use of the irrigation water by the Levels settlers was the prime cause of their troubles, as they said the water seeped underground from the higher ground up-country and reappeared in the lower Seadown land. They pointed out that for very many

years no such trouble had occurred and they asked straight out that a stoppage be placed on the using of this irrigation water by the settlers on the Levels plains, or, failing that, that the Seadown farmers be properly and equitably compensated by the Government for whatever damage had been done to their properties and livings. A rough estimate made of the drop in values of the flooded lands is 50 per cent.

In the old days, before 50 years ago, and since then also, Seadown was renowned for the excellence of the wheat grown upon the estate. A paragraph in the "Timaru Herald" of October 30, 1879, mentions the impending sale of this estate in the following words: "We have been re-

quested to call special attention to the sale of about 4000 acres of the celebrated Seadown estate, which will be held on Thursday. The property now to be offered to the public is situated a few miles north of Timaru along the line of railway to Christchurch. The situation cannot be surpassed, and the 30 different lots of from 50 to 350 acres are all carefully laid down in English grasses. Deep alluvial soil will stand almost continuous cropping. There is an abundant supply of water in each paddock, and the fencing is of the most substantial kind. Altogether it would be impossible to have better land."

It was further mentioned that the champion cup at the Sydney Inter-

national Show had been gained by wheat grown on the Seadown estate and if it was the best at Sydney it was the best in the world!

Since that time very many thousands of bushels of the best wheat have been grown on Seadown and yields of up to 60 bushels per acre were not at all uncommon; in fact they were expected. Now the land is so waterlogged in many parts that it would be very nearly impossible to do much in the line of cultivation, and though much money and labour has been expended in trying to rectify matters, the land is little, if any, better than it was at its worst, and the outlook is emphatically not too good from a layman's point of view.

It took several months for the irrigation water to seep through to the Seadown farms, and one can imagine that, if this water was not used for a year it would take a considerable period for any improvement to be noticeable, and it might take some years for the accumulation of water in the lower soil to disappear. But one year without irrigation water would not break the Levels men, and it might show a way how to help the afflicted Seadown settlers. At any rate it does not seem to be sense to just go right along in the same manner, hoping that the trouble will right itself, for it assuredly will not.

The opposition to the proposals of the Seadown men states that wetness is no new thing on Seadown, and that the whole estate had to have drainage channels cut on it very many years ago, and that since then, in wet seasons, the land has been flooded in portions and to a greater or lesser extent. This may be true enough, but it should be pointed out that this present flooding has taken place in what is probably the longest dry spell which the district has ever known, when, in the usual way, no sign of flooding would be observed anywhere on the estate. In short, the Seadown farmers assert definitely that their trouble is entirely caused by seepage from the Levels irrigation water.



A scene on Cargo Bros.' property. Rushes are growing and water is lying in the paddock.



This paddock on Messrs. Cargo Bros.' property, Seadown district was in wheat in 1934. In the following year it was in grass and rope, and in 1937 it provided a heavy crop of hay. In 1938 it was in a saturated condition and rushes grew to this height within three years.

# ★ Too Much Water

## FARMERS IN SERIOUS PLIGHT NEAR IRRIGATION AREA

[South Island Representative]

Soil too soggy to carry machines for cultivation or cropping; waterlogged pastures unfit for grazing for the greater part of the year; grass which is rapidly deteriorating into paddocks of rushes. This, briefly, is the depressing story of a large area of farming land in the Lower Seadown district of South Canterbury.

These farms have been so badly affected by a rising water level in recent years that they are seeking immediate steps to save their farms from total conversion into swamps.

Seepage from the Seadown irrigation area is believed by farmers to be responsible, and they are seeking immediate steps to save their farms from total conversion into swamps.

A drainage scheme was introduced some years ago as a result of widespread agitation, but, beyond giving temporary relief, this has proved inadequate to cope with the mounting quantity of surface water. The position has gone from bad to worse. Most of the farms are part of what at one time was the Seadown Estate, famed for its wheat. Cropping continued extensively after the formation of smaller holdings, but land which produced from 60 to 80 bushel wheat crops, higher yields of oats, good crops of potatoes and fine fields of peas and barley have decreased in production to such an extent that on most farms the only returns possible have been from the saving of grass seed. Where even this has not been possible land owners have had to look elsewhere for means of livelihood.

The present problem can be well appreciated by an inspection of the most severely affected properties and by listening to the stories of the farmers concerned. The New Zealand Farmer Weekly representative recently made a tour of the district to see what Lower Seadown farmers are up against. Soil Fertility Lost

Mr. J. King had been cropping oats, barley, wheat and partridge peas for close on 40 years and his wheat yields were usually between 60 and 70 bushels to the acre. He had no drainage problems, but within a year of the establishment of the Levels irrigation scheme surface water began to appear on his paddocks.

They continued to be so saturated that the soil became sour and cold and practically useless for productive purposes. He purchased sheep, but footrot took its toll, and the only return from his property last season was from a small paddock of certified ryegrass saved for seed on higher ground. Mr. King, therefore, has been forced to accept employment away from his farm.

Mr. A. Ross has been on his present property of 300 acres for 40-odd years, and during that time he has harvested many 60-bushel crops of wheat, and a 79-bushel-to-the-acre crop in one year. He also has had from 80 to 90-bushel oat crops and good yields of peas and certified potatoes. In 1937 his property was so dry that pastures were burnt out by the sun and lack of moisture. He prepared a paddock for lucerne and sowed it in a cloud of dust. The irrigation scheme was introduced to the upper region of Seadown and the water was turned on in October of that year. By Christmas time it was noticed that the gravel pits around the district were beginning to hold water. Within two more months they were full and they have remained so since—sometimes overflowing.

Mr. Ross tried to grow wheat for four seasons after the irrigation was started, but was forced to abandon further attempts when his yield was as low as seven bushels to the acre. In 1939, his crop yielded 11 bushels; in the following year, it was not worth harvesting; in 1940 part of a 10-acre crop on higher ground returned 30 bushels; and in 1942 the yield was seven bushels to the acre.

### Affected By Irrigation

Mr. Ross finds that when the irrigation water is turned off each year the water level of his land drops, but rises

again shortly after the re-commencement of irrigation. He has secured good crops of linen flax by harvesting it before the water level rises, and more than once he has cleared his field only in the nick of time. Despite the fact that this summer was an exceptionally dry one, his paddocks remained in such a waterlogged state that he was unable to turn a furrow. He, like many other farmers, considers this is sufficient indication that with more irrigation water being used a greater volume is received at Lower Seadown by seepage. Mr. Ross is now endeavouring to recuperate by leasing an additional 300 acres on higher ground.

Mr. R. Mehrtens has had his most highly productive paddock ruined by surface water. He took excellent wheat crops off it in rotation regularly, and now, in his own words, "it is nothing but a duck pond."

More than half of Mr. W. Haselden's 130-acre property is waterlogged, and this land, the productive value of which is now practically nil, at one time returned in a year 1200 sacks of grain and 1300 sacks of potatoes, as well as a 56-bushel pea crop and a crop of certified ryegrass seed. Wheat yields were as high as 80 bushels to the acre, barley was up to 75 bushels, and the potato yield was 16 tons to the acre. In one year an exceptionally good paddock gave an acreage yield of 22 tons. To-day this same area is not in a condition to be cultivated or grazed.

### Young Grass Wasted

Mr. Haselden attempted to graze a young eight-acre pasture with light cattle with disastrous results. It is now pock-marked with hoof holes up to a foot in depth. Young grass in an adjoining paddock is growing rank for want of controlled grazing, but the soggy ground would not carry a beast. The seed was not sown in sowing out these pastures—16lb of cocksfoot, 1 bushel of perennial ryegrass, 1 bushel of Italian ryegrass, 4lb of white clover, 4lb of Montgomery red clover, 3lb of Timothy and 2lb of crested dogstail to the acre—and not only is he unable to make use of them at a time when grazing would be beneficial, but there is the danger of them becoming permanently waterlogged.

On this farm good cropping land has been turned into what can only be used at the best of times for running cattle, and so this year Mr. Haselden is spending close on £1000 in changing over to dairying. How long he can keep his farm on a productive basis with cows he does not know, but he considers the trouble can be remedied either by effective drainage or by ceasing irrigation on the higher end of the district.

### Rushes Thrive

Messrs. W. and S. Cargo have owned a property of 130 acres for 38 years. It was first-class land for wheat, oats and barley and it also produced exceptional rape, turnips, potatoes and mangels. Shortly after the irrigation scheme opened water appeared on the surface and rushes commenced to thrive on the

heavily saturated pastures. To-day it can graze stock for three months in the year, while rushes are head-high over most of the paddocks.

The story of Mr. C. M. O'Connor's handicap is a poignant one. Besides growing large acreages of wheat down through the years—there were 100 acres in three successive seasons—he grew winter feed for 70 cows. He still milks 50 cows all the year round, but his 225 acres provides only three months of grazing and odd patches of hay, with the result that after 52 years of farming Mr. O'Connor's property does not pay its way. He has to rent 60 acres of high ground some distance away at £150 a year in order to keep his dairy herd in production.

These are not isolated cases. There are others, and the theme of each story is similar—like the man who had to walk off his farm and have his house shifted before it became surrounded by an almost impassible swamp.

### Gravel Pits Full

There is evidence that there is some connection between irrigation water on the upper reaches of the Seadown district and the waterlogged farm lands of Lower Seadown. Gravel pits which provided playgrounds for country children before 1937 now provide basins for 20ft or 30ft of water, which rises and overflows at the driest periods of the year, when irrigation is at its height. When the annual irrigation ceases about March there is an appreciable drop in the water level through all the lower properties, but before pastures and soils can make a full recovery it again rises when irrigation is recommenced.

The irrigation engineer of the Public Works Department, Mr. J. O. Riddell, agrees that the trouble is bad at present, but he points out that "we have had a sequence of very wet seasons. . . We have been piling up the rainfall for five or six years now and this is bound to aggravate ground water troubles."

It is admitted by the farmers concerned that in the past two seasons the rainfall has been above the average, but they do not consider this represents "a sequence of very wet seasons." A sequence of very wet seasons, says Timaru, where the average annual rainfall since the figures were first taken in 1897 has been 33in. For the five years from 1939 to 1943 the average annual rainfall in the district was 19.03in, with 21.76in as the highest in 1940.

Since the start of irrigation, the water level of Lower Seadown has been raised so much that its lowest point is not far from the surface, with the result that any rainfall above the average causes severe surface flooding. This was not so before the underground supply was supplemented by irrigation water. On one farm the water level for a greater part of the year was from 6ft to 8ft below the surface prior to irrigation, and now it is above the ground level for at least ten months of the year. In the past twelve months the lowest level underground has not been more than 5in and that was for only two months in the year. These measurements were carefully recorded in a paddock which at one time produced first-class wheat.

### "Not a Pukeko"

On June 24, 1938, the Minister for Works, Mr. Semple, visited Seadown and inspected waterlogged areas. When he saw flooded farms he said he would not inspect them any closer as he was "not a pukeko. . . There is no use arguing over who is responsible for water being here. The thing is to get rid of it. If we did dump water on to an area the onus would naturally be on us," he said.

As a result of the inspection, Mr. Semple there and then offered a grant of £8000, which was later raised to

£9000, for a major scheme involving the draining of the Lower Seadown district and the lowering of the level of the Washdyke lagoon. The scheme was introduced and a main large drain was constructed running parallel with the sea coast from Tidal Creek on the north to the lagoon on the south. Lateral drains were put through the worst affected

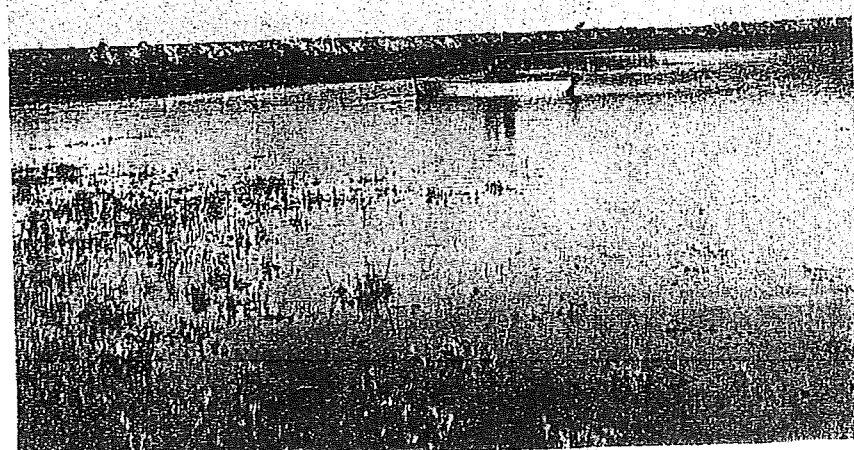
properties and a permanent outlet to the sea was made from the lagoon. There was an appreciable drop in the water level, and it was felt that the drainage scheme was a success, but it was discovered that the irrigation water had been turned off at the same time, and this was believed to be chiefly responsible for the easing of the position.

When Tidal Creek was diverted the natural mouth was closed by the action of the sea, and this forced the main drain to carry all of the Tidal Creek water which filled the channel and allowed little acceptance of water from the lateral drains. Thus, farms along

the seacoast became more affected than ever, and the position to-day remains little changed—there is no satisfactory outlet for drainage water from Lower Seadown properties.

Agitation is now at its height to bring about an effective remedy, and district farmers and sympathisers have been outspoken in their comment. The support of various organisations has been enlisted.

The opinion of farmers principally affected is that drainage should be introduced immediately below the irrigated area so that the surplus water would be carried away before it reached the lower levels.



Here are a couple of children having a journey in a small boat across one of Mr. A. Ross' paddocks.

This article contains searchable text which was automatically generated and may contain errors. Join the community and correct any errors you spot to help us improve Papers Past.

Switch to [View correctable text](#) to explore this feature.

---

## THE PLIGHT OF SEADOWN FARMERS

To the Editor of "The Timaru Herald"

Sir,—As New Zealand approaches its centenary in jubilant fashion, it seems incredible that even a small sector can wantonly be forced back to its original state of wastage of water from an irrigation scheme. The present water-logged paddocks and the rapid appearance of rushes on highly-valued wheat-growing and fattening land near Seadown district shows in no uncertain fashion the rapid deterioration of much first-class farm lands. Surely, the Minister of Public Works cannot know the whole facts of the situation. Homesteads are being rapidly denuded of shelter, as trees planted, perhaps, up to eighty years ago, are unable to exist with water continually lying around their roots. Let me suggest to those responsible for initiating the scheme, not to stand idly by and see homes and the livelihood of valuable citizens sacrificed. Until the drainage scheme eventuates could they not try and save many settlers from complete ruin by prevailing on the Public Works Department to carry out one of the following remedies: (1) Suspend irrigation completely until the drain goes in; (2) Concrete all irrigation channels to prevent seepage. One wonders if the Public Works Department does not know of the farmers own problems on the farms without having extra work in fighting for their ex-

## THE PLIGHT OF SEADOWN FARMERS

Timaru Herald, Volume CXLV,  
Issue 21312, 4 April 1939, Page  
12

### Using this item

Stuff Ltd is the copyright owner for the Timaru Herald. You can reproduce in-copyright material from this newspaper for non-commercial use under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International licence](#) (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0).

[Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0](#)

[International licence](#) (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0).

This newspaper is not available for commercial use without the consent of Stuff Ltd. For advice on reproduction of out-of-copyright material from this newspaper, please refer to the

[Copyright guide](#).

istence brought about by man-made menaces. Also important to Seadown is the feeding of babies. There are at present and always have been more babies reared in the Seadown area, than on the thirsty stones and large families are not yet relegated to the far bygone days. Perhaps irrigation will cause an alteration in vital statistics as we shall have the Minister of Education towing the ancient Seadown school back to its original site.—I am etc.,

GUM-BOOTS.

# FREE GRANT

Offers £8000

## Drainage

for Washdyke Seadown

### Complaints

Will Stand by Estimate  
The Minister: We will meet that. The estimate is ours, and we will find any additional money if it is needed. We want to get on to the major scheme. How are you going to find the balance? I want to get finally.

Mr C. E. Kerr said the chairman of the Levels County Council (Mr T. B. Garrick) had stated, when the scheme had been under consideration, that the Council would have no security for the payment of its share. It had been suggested that the Council should obtain some security over the land.

Mr J. Harris: If the Council stuck its toes in, what would happen?

The Minister: I am not prepared to say.

Mr Harris: You can see how desperate the situation is.

In reply to the Minister, Mr Beok stated that employment would be provided for 25 men for nine months. Two drag-line scoops would really be needed.

The Minister stated that as there was only one machine in the district, another should be requisitioned. "I want this job started now, within the next fortnight or so," he said.

Mr Clyde Carr, M.P., said the settlers affected had not been able to get in machines to thresh their wheat, and the stacks were standing in water.

Several members of the deputation urged the Minister to use his influence with the Levels County Council to obtain a subsidy, and Mr Carr remarked that when the Council was next interviewed, a gun should be taken along. Other speakers dwelt on the difficulty in finding the money.

The Minister: We'll find £8000. (Applause.)

Motions of thanks were proposed to the Minister and Mr Carr, by Mr Harris.

Last night, Mr Carr received a telegram from Mr Semple to the effect that after a conference with the Hon. H. T. Armstrong he had promised advice that £3000 of the £8000 he had promised would be available from the employment promotion fund. Mr Semple asked Mr Carr to communicate with the Levels County Council and the ratepayers affected, asking them to find the £2000 required between them with all possible expedition, as he was anxious to start the work immediately.

## Seadown Farmers Irrigation Woes 1938-1955

# SERIOUS PLIGHT

Farmers In Seadown Area  
May 3rd 1948  
Land Flooded By Seepage

Paddocks covered with sheets of water, stretches of bog, slush and mud; land, useless for cropping, abandoned to rushes, docks and swamp grass—and all after the driest season for 25 years—these were amongst the impressions gained by a party of Timaru businessmen, representatives of the stock firms and of the Chamber of Commerce, who visited farms at Seadown yesterday to see at first hand the plight in which the settlers were placed.

The visit was made at the invitation of some of the settlers, who wished the businessmen to see for themselves the result of what is claimed to be seepage of water from the Levels Irrigation scheme.

### Visit for Cropping

The party first visited the farm of Cargo Bros, and inspected a paddock of 20 acres, carrying a pond two to three chains long and about a chain wide and containing a foot to a foot and a half of water. This area, Mr S. Cargo stated, did not usually carry water, except in seasons of heavy rainfall. During November and December of last year, at the driest part of the year, the water began to rise, coincident with the commencement of irrigation in the higher levels. While the water had filled up the hollow, it showed its presence in other parts of the paddock in isolated boggy patches, in heavy muddy soil and in ubiquitous rushes. The paddock had been sown in wheat at various times since 1914, Mr Cargo said, and with a rainfall of 20.55 inches had produced 57 bushels to the acre. Yet in a season which could be described as a drought, the land was a bog unfit for cropping.

The story was repeated in an adjacent 10-acre paddock which had produced 62 bushels of wheat to the acre in 1928 with a rainfall of 33.78 inches. Yesterday it was sown to be a mass of surface mud. Another paddock which did not appear to carry so much water was clogged with rushes in places of impenetrable profusion. This was land which had been farmed for the last 60 years, being frequently cropped, and only twice in the last 30 years had it been necessary to grub rushes. "It would be useless to put a plough into it now," Mr Cargo said. "The water would follow the furrow."

On the way to the farm of Mr M. C. O'Connor, a stop was made to inspect a drain linking up with a dead-end drain of the irrigation scheme. Although no water was flowing from the irrigation channel, the extension drain, which was excavated to a greater depth, was carrying a fair flow of seepage water a foot deep.

### "Worst of the Lot"

"This is the worst of the lot," was the comment of one of the party after viewing an area of several acres on Mr O'Connor's farm. It represented the result of an effort extending over two years to sow down grass. Channels had been dug to lead away the water and where the drill could not be used the seed had been broadcast. But the water had won and the grass was contending with mud and docks. A rich tract of land had been practically put out of production.

The area affected by the seepage water extends from both sides of the Seadown Road, between the railway crossing and Hadley's corner to the sea, and comprises some 5000 acres. The district has in the past been known to be wet, but the flooding experienced during the last three years has been abnormal. The recurrence of the trouble in a drought period gives substance to the inference that the flooding is due to the seepage of water from the Levels Irrigation scheme. For practically three years much of the land in the area has been unworkable, and the potential production from land with a considerably higher fertility than that of the lighter irrigated soils has been lost. Apart from the severe loss which has thus fallen on the settlers individually, the loss in production must, from the national viewpoint, be placed as a substantial deficit against the benefits accruing from the irrigation scheme.

The Seadown drainage scheme is designed to intercept the water and prevent it from seeping through to the lower lands. The channel on the property of Mr A. Ross, running parallel to the Seadown Road, was seen yesterday to be carrying a large volume of water only a few chains from its commencement. Whether the scheme, which is estimated to cost £10,000 will materially alleviate the flooding on the Seadown farms remains to be seen. At least some of the settlers are sceptical as to the result.

# Press Leading Article June 20th 1941 Irrigate in Haste?

An article printed this morning gives an account of the disastrous water-logging of 4000 to 5000 acres of highly productive South Canterbury land at Seadown, the area of one of the Government's major irrigation schemes. Wheat land that has regularly yielded 50 to 65 bushels an acre is out of production, too wet to plough. Rushes have invaded the ground. Its condition makes foot-rot among sheep an obvious possibility. Even light grazing land beyond the immediate area of irrigation has begun to show the creep of the water. The first signs of this flooding appeared in 1937, when the works engineers attributed it to excessive rain; but the last two years have been subnormal in rainfall, yet the seepage has deepened and extended. It has done so, moreover, in spite of drainage works which have already cost at least £13,000 without doing much good. These are the circumstances in which the Seadown ratepayers have refused to contribute £500 to the estimated cost (£2500) of further drainage. They are not sure that it will be useful; but they are sure that the responsibility is wholly the Government's. More than that, a petition signed by 85 per cent. of the ratepayers, many of whom use the irrigation water with advantage but are ready to forgo it in the interests of the others, urges the Government to close down the scheme entirely and give the land a chance to recover. That may take a long time.

The seriousness of the situation is beyond any doubt. Whether the extension of the drainage works will suffice, alone, to remedy it is a question which only experts can answer; and they will perhaps be wise, not to answer it offhand. It seems that too many questions, asked and unasked, have been answered that way. That the excess water and its damaging effects are attributable to the irrigation works is, on the face of it, an assumption so probable as to look like a certainty; but there may, at least, be other contributory causes. This is a question that should be promptly and thoroughly investigated, and the engineer needs the geologist to help him. Ultimate action will be determined accordingly. But where excessive water is the trouble and a large flow can be controlled, it can hardly be absurd to shut it off and observe the results. That can be done without prejudicing further investigation and further decision. It may be added, finally, that if it is established that the introduction of irrigation water is the sole or dominant cause of this disastrous damage, the Minister for Public Works who hurried on this and other schemes will not be able to say that he was not warned against the danger of haste. He was.

## RELIEF FOR SEADOWN FARMERS

"The Soils Conservation and Rivers Control Council has made available £5600 to enable work to be undertaken to improve drainage conditions of the Seadown area of the Levels County Council," said the Minister of Works (the Hon. R. Semple) in a letter received at a meeting of the Council yesterday. Mr Semple said that the work involved would be the completion of the original scheme. Additional drains would be built and some of the original drains deepened which he trusted would be of immediate relief to the land. "The Seadown farmers have had a rough time," said the chairman (Mr R. G. Cleland). "This work might bring relief."

"The Federated Farmers had a better idea," commented Mr J. Scott. "They wanted to blow up the headworks of the scheme!"

Press Nov 11 4-3

# SEEPAGE AT SEADOWN

## Mr Cargo's Reply To Minister

### INVITATION TO INSPECT AREA

"Mr Semple claims that the Seadown area was always wet; if this statement were true his own department adopted novel methods of control when they constructed an irrigation scheme for this area," said the chairman of the Seadown Levels Seepage Committee (Mr S. Cargo) in a statement to "The Press" last evening, when he replied to comments on the Seadown drainage scheme made by the Minister of Works (the Hon. R. Semple), and reported in "The Press" yesterday.

"Land that has grown up to 70 bushels of wheat to the acre does not suffer from many disadvantages such as excessive wet and crops such as this were grown on Seadown land previous to irrigation," said Mr Cargo. "The Minister still quotes the inspection of the Washdyke lagoon and tidal creek flooded areas in 1936, this condition of flooding being caused by the outlet to the sea being closed. This was not affecting the rich agricultural farms higher up that are now so adversely affected by seepage from the Levels irrigation scheme. Every shingle pit in this area indicates clearly where the water, which is now causing trouble, comes from. The Minister should be aware of these facts."

"Regarding the £1000 share in drainage costs to be born by the settlers the Minister should also be aware that his predecessor (the late Hon. H. J. Armstrong), at a meeting held on July 9, 1941, and quoted by Mr Semple, promised the Seadown settlers after an inspection of the Seadown drainage scheme and the seepage area, that he would continue with drainage and pumping in an endeavour to remedy this position, and would not ask for the settlers' share of the cost until they were in a position to pay, and he was satisfied that they would be unable to contribute anything while conditions remained as he had seen them. Mr Armstrong said he would be satisfied with the settlers' assurance that the £1000 would be paid when they were in a position to do so."

"The settlers expected that this promise would be honoured. When it was realised by them that nothing was going to be done until the £1000 was actually paid, the settlers straight away gave the rating authority, the Levels County Council, the necessary power to rate the Seadown drainage area. The settlers took this action over 18 months ago, so that the Minister's allegation against the settlers about delay is unfounded. Such delay necessitated by legal formalities could have only been overcome by the Minister himself, and not by the settlers."

"Regarding the Minister's remarks concerning the war, as I stated previously, men with farming interests in the seepage area are now overseas fighting for justice. Others in the same area fought in the last war for that same purpose. All that the Seadown settlers are asking for is justice, which has been denied them for so long."

"The fact that I realised the necessity for more primary production in war time was shown in my previous statement, when I deplored the loss of war-time production from such a large area of fertile land as that included in the Seadown seepage area. It is ridiculous, on the part of the Minister, to suggest non-co-operation by myself or the settlers, as it is obviously in their interests to give full co-operation so that a solution of the problem can be found. Mr Semple and several of his Ministerial colleagues have been invited to inspect this area in company with my committee, which is comprised of men who themselves, or their families, have resided in this area for from 35 to 60 years, and who are all competent to give an opinion of the cause of the problem, based on experience in the area both before and after the Levels irrigation scheme was functioning. We again offer the Minister and his chief engineer an invitation to inspect the area in company with the seepage committee."

1946

# SOUTH CANTERBURY

## PLIGHT OF FARMERS AT SEADOWN

### MINISTER OF WORKS TO BE ADVISED

The plight of farmers at Seadown will be reported to the Minister of Public Works (the Hon. R. Semple) by the Levels County Council. This was decided at the monthly meeting of the council yesterday.

The chairman (Mr R. G. Cleland) said that many hundreds of acres of land which had formerly grown wheat could not be utilised in any manner now. He attributed the cause of the flooding to irrigation which was carried out during dry periods by farmers living above the affected area.

"The condition of these farms is deplorable. There is not a dry spot on some of them for an animal to lie down," said Mr Cleland. He suggested referring the matter to the South Canterbury Catchment Board. One large drain in the area had been cleaned and would help the situation, he said, but there were many farms.

"It is just inhuman to ask people to live on them, that's all," said Mr J. Scott. He did not know why nothing had been done, he said.

Mr R. W. R. Munro said there was no doubt that it was a deplorable state of affairs. It was a matter of knowing

## NEW DRAIN CUT AT SEADOWN

### Some Farms Now Bone Dry

#### Dry Seepage Problem Solved

It would appear that the problem of drainage in the Seadown area, which had been aggravated by the Levels irrigation scheme, has been solved by the cutting of the new drain which follows the Seadown road. According to Mr J. Robinson, who resides there, the new drain has been so effective that his front lawn, which had not dug two years ago because it was too spongy, was now too hard to be dug.

Hedley's shingle pit near his home- stead had acted as a meter showing the ground water level. Normally at this time of the year there would be about 6ft of water in it; to-day it alternated between a few feet and being dry, according to the volume of irrigation, said Mr Robinson. This season had been a dry one, but against that was the fact that irrigation had been used extensively.

In a paddock close to his house there was a depression which a heavy rain used to convert into a miniature lake. After the last rain the water drained away quickly and the depression was now as dry as a bone. As far as he could judge, the level in Hedley's pit would never be higher than the level of the water in the drain. In other words, the drain would cope with excessive rainfall and also irrigation, although both were not generally experienced together. His cows used to drink water from a hole in the ground, but since the drain began to function, he had to draw water from the race for his stock.

It would be, perhaps, premature to make an emphatic judgment about the drainage problem as this was a dry season, but in his own mind he was sure that the drain had solved the problem and there was a danger that it might make the land too dry, concluded Mr Robinson.

"Cropping Permitted  
Mr W. B. Cartwright said that his place had been one of the worst affected farms in the Seadown area. A great deal of his land had become unworkable because of the wet, but this year his farm was bone dry. Formerly, coal was dumped at the gate as the roadway to the house was too soggy to allow the passage of a lorry. On one occasion they had to have two tractors to manipulate a linen fax puller. Today he was growing 60 acres of grass, 25 of barley and 25 of linseed.

His crops looked well and he would have no difficulty in harvesting them. He thought that the new drain was doing a marvellous job. It was so efficient that it might in a dry season make the land in the Seadown area too dry for agricultural purposes.

# IRRIGATION IN CANTERBURY

## ANNUAL LOSS OF £600,000

### MR GOOSMAN ADDRESSES PROGRESS LEAGUE

Irrigation schemes in Canterbury were losing about £600,000 a year—a pretty big sum," said the Minister of Works (Mr W. S. Goosman) when he addressed the annual meeting of the Canterbury Progress League yesterday. At present, 112,000 acres of land was available for irrigation, but only 16,833 acres (15 per cent) had been irrigated.

"I think the majority of people realise we are facing a problem of increasing population—50,000 a year—and we have to build equal to two towns for 25,000 people every year to provide for it," said Mr Goosman. "It is estimated that by 1975 or 1977 our population will have increased to about 600,000, and if we are to maintain our standard of living, we will have to increase our production by 50 per cent. That is a man-sized task. We have not only got to produce to feed ourselves, but we have to produce to export in order to import. All our resources have to be marshalled to that end."

Mr Goosman said that 60 per cent of the Dominion's population was formerly in the South Island, but now two-thirds of the population was in the North Island. The reasons for this, and reverse were rainfall and grass; and had been built up on grass. Ninety-seven per cent of the country's exports came from the soil, and if lost would be a long time.

Progress On Schemes  
Canterbury had insufficient rainfall, but there was plenty of water in the rivers, said Mr Goosman. An attempt had been made by the previous Government to promote irrigation and a measure of success had been achieved.

Irrigated land at Redcliff (South Canterbury) could total 4000 acres, but only 430 acres had been irrigated, said the Minister. At the Levels, the potential was 11,000 acres, but the figure so far was 981 acres. The Ashburton-Lynchurst scheme could provide 1,000 irrigated acres, but now had only 1257 acres irrigated. The Mayfield-Hinds project, with a potential of 40,000 acres, had 2167 acres irrigated.

Water was available on those schemes at a cost of 4s an acre-foot for six-inches all over the irrigable land, said Mr Goosman. That was not very much—only 24 inches on a quarter of an acre of irrigable land. Extra water could be had at the same rate. On a demand basis, the cost would be 10s an acre-foot.

Contracts for the schemes would expire in 1964. The Government would continue them till then, in the hope that cheap water would encourage farmers to support the schemes. It was estimated that future schemes could provide 750,000 irrigated acres in Canterbury, and this would mean that thousands more farms could be created on the Canterbury Plains.

Local Control Envisaged  
Eventually, it was hoped to establish local control so that farmers would run their own schemes. Mr Goosman said, Drainage schemes in different districts were run locally, and he did not see any reason why bodies could be formed to rate for water put farms on the land as easily as they could rate to have it taken off.

Farmers would be supplied with all the information Government departments and investigators could give, but whether there should be a scheme would be left to be decided by a ballot of the farmers in the area concerned, said the Minister. "I cannot think of anything that will promote the progress and prosperity of this enormous district more than the furthering of the irrigation system," Mr Goosman said. "It takes a lot of capital and a lot of hard work, but it means thousands more farms, thousands more people. It means wonderful progress and prosperity not only for Canterbury, but for the whole of New Zealand. It is going to come. What is Canterbury going to do about it?"

# SEADOWN SEEPAGE PROBLEM

Sir.—At the meeting of the executive of the South Canterbury Farmers' Federation, I was reported as making the bald statement that "farmers have to be told to stop irrigating for one year." I feel that I should forward to you for publication the chief points of my advocacy for the discontinuance of irrigation until adequate drainage is provided. They are:

(1) That Seadown was famed throughout Canterbury for its wheat-growing propensities, but through irrigation seepage is now reduced to third rate cattle grazing country.

(2) That settlers affected were forced through the deplorably wet conditions to revert to dairy farming, but with the full realisation that unless a rapid improvement was obtained, their livelihood was in jeopardy.

(3) That as a farmers' organisation what right has the executive to adopt the line of least resistance, and state its intention not to take any action in the matter? What justification is there for the organisation's existence when it refuses to assist and protect its own members?

(4) Is there any member of the executive who can honestly state that it is fair and just for irrigators farming the Levels and Kerri town shingle flats, to turn on water in huge, uncontrolled point, the water should be turned off for a year and the results observed.

(5) That the Government and its advisers have persistently refused to admit that irrigation is the cause of the trouble and in order to prove that the water should be turned off for a year and the results observed.

(6) That if the returns from irrigation are as bountiful as we are led to believe, then why should the children and grand children of the irrigators, who have been operating for eight years, to refrain from irrigating and so assist the Seadown settlers to prove their case.

(7) That some years ago a petition asking irrigators to refrain from using water until a satisfactory drainage scheme was in operation was readily signed by 85 per cent of the farmers in the area concerned, and by grappling with the problem of the 15 per cent who refused, Federated Farmers had a golden opportunity to prove to the farming community its ability to face up to a difficult problem and bear it. To this I must add that I am fully aware of the benefits derived from irrigation, and make no secret of the fact that I hope to have at some future time irrigation facilities on a portion of my farm to counter a dry spell, but under no circumstances would I use water if requested by Federated Farmers to refrain from doing so, in order to assist the ailing farmers to prove their case. Obviously there is little or no gain in an individual refraining from using water. All farmers must desire if the position is to be appreciably improved. I am, etc.

DAY, JULY 12, 1946

## DRAINAGE AT SEADOWN

### SCHEME PROMISES WELL

#### RELIEF ALREADY FELT

Deep drains are well on the way to restoring the productivity of the area of land at Seadown near Washdyke, which for some years has lain almost sterile because of seepage. The new drainage scheme was embarked upon last year ago, but already a number of the settlers have had a great deal of benefit from it.

It will be recalled that a few years before the war the settlers of the district became alarmed at the extent of the damage being done by seepage. Some farms were abandoned, and a number more were brought to a state in which it was practically impossible to run anything but cattle on them. A district once a large producer of grain, almost ceased growing grain together. Rushes and sedges took possession of substantial areas, and came so sudden that during the winter it was little better than a duck pond.

The area was in a pitiful state when the writer saw it about a year ago. Its condition then was in marked contrast to its condition this week, when a party of farmers, mainly from the Ashburton County, looked over it. There is still plenty of wet land about, but paddocks which last year were inches and sometimes feet, deep in water which had been standing for months are now dry enough to walk over without gumboots.