

SUBSIDISED DRAINAGE- AND SLUDGE-CHANNELS.

Sludge-channel, St. Bathans.—This is a sludge- or tailings-channel now in course of construction from Dunstan Creek to the mining-claims at St. Bathans, to enable the ground to be worked to a depth of 70ft. below the old workings. The old quartz wash-drift in this neighbourhood contains a little gold all through it, which pays for washing by the hydraulic process. It is not yet known whether this extra depth of tail-race will be sufficient to bottom the ground where this quartz wash-drift was originally deposited. This tailings-channel was commenced in 1882, and will yet take about three years to complete; but it is now up to such a point that the gold obtained from the drift through which it is being carried almost pays for the cost of its construction. A subsidy of £1,000 was authorised for this channel on the principle of pound for pound, the whole of which has now been paid.

Drainage Tail-race, Ophir.—This is the continuation of a tail-race that was constructed up Black's Flat many years ago to drain the ground. This tail-race has been continued up to near the station homestead, which now drains the whole of the flat; but the ground that was expected to prove payable in the vicinity of this tail-race did not turn out according to expectations. A few parties of miners are working ground by means of this tail-race, but they are only making very small wages. It has been extended for over a mile, and has cost £2,300. Of this amount £1,150 has been paid as subsidy.

Repairs to Sludge-channel, Ross.—A heavy flood occurred last year, and washed away portions of the wing-dam. This was repaired at a cost of £109 1s. Of this amount £54 10s. 4d. has been paid to the Borough of Ross as a subsidy.

GRANTS TOWARDS THE CONSTRUCTION OF DRAINAGE- AND SLUDGE-CHANNELS AND OUTLETS FOR TAILINGS.

Storm-water Channel, Ross.—A heavy flood occurred about two years ago, which carried away the greater portion of the original channel constructed in 1867, flooding all the underground workings in Ross Flat. This channel had to be reconstructed before the workings could be again resumed, and £750 has been paid for doing this work.

Sludge-channel, Ross.—This is really for the construction of wing-dams, to prevent the sludge and tailings from the hydraulic sluicing-claims damaging the freehold land along the sea-beach. If this had not been done the proprietors of the land threatened to take proceedings against the miners to stop them from working. A grant of £1,500 was authorised for this work and constructing a new storm-channel, it being understood that one-half of this amount—namely, £750—would be spent on each. The work was done under the supervision of the Borough Council of Ross, and the whole of the £1,500 has been paid.

Tailings Outlet, Maerewhenua.—This was for the purchase of land on the flats on the northern side of the Maerewhenua River, to give an outlet for tailings from claims that are being worked in the mining reserve. The land on the side of the river being all freehold, the proprietors would not allow tailings to come through their properties. There has been £1,555 4s. paid for land purchase, and £40 for damages and building retaining-wall, making a total of £1,595 4s.

Thames Drainage Board.—The Drainage Board purchased the big pump and machinery at the Thames from the Deep Level Cross Company, and are working it by contributions, or rates raised from mining-claims within a certain area. This steam-engine and pumping-gear originally cost the colony £50,000, and on the provinces being abolished this plant was handed over to the county, who, after a certain time, allowed it to be sold to pay off some of their liabilities. The Deep Level Cross Company then became the purchasers, but, after working it for some time, they found the expense of working so great that they were glad to get clear of it at any price, and sold the whole plant to the Drainage Board for £2,500. About twelve months ago the Board represented to the Government that the pump could be worked with water-power, and that the cost of alteration would amount to £4,000; also, that the saving in cost of maintenance would be over £1,000 per annum. A subsidy of £2,000 was authorised for this work.

AIDS TO DEEP-LEVEL TUNNELS.

Tokatea Company, Coromandel.—This company lost the auriferous-quartz lode in the deep-level workings, and after constructing an adit for about 3,000ft. could not discover it. A subsidy was authorised to the extent of £350, on the principle of pound for pound to prospect the mine, and the whole of this subsidy has been paid, but the company has not yet been successful in finding a payable lode at these levels.

Deep-level Tunnel, Tapu.—This is an adit-level which was commenced at the level of the dray-road going up Tapu Creek, a short distance above Mr. Pepper's crushing-battery. It was intended to go through the range to cut the quartz lodes that were worked in the early days by the Half-moon Company, which would be a distance of 1,500ft. This adit is constructed for 617ft., but operations are now suspended, and prospecting is being done on a quartz-leader which was cut about 200ft. in from the mouth of the adit. Subsidies on the principle of pound for pound have been authorised from time to time to the extent of £600, the whole of which has now been paid. The total cost of the work has been £1,239 15s. 4d.

Deep-level Tunnel, Reef-ton.—This tunnel or adit-level was commenced in 1882, and has been carried on ever since. The original intention was to tunnel through the range from the Inangahua River, near Black's Point, to the Waitahu River, a distance of 2 miles 24 chains, to cut across all the lodes that might be found, and test whether payable reefs existed at great depths below the surface. This adit-level is now constructed for 2,706ft. It is expected soon to cut the line of the quartz lode which is found in the Venus Company's ground. The cost of constructing this adit-level up to the end of March last was £6,018. Of this amount £3,009 has been paid as subsidy. Another contract for its extension has been let, amounting to £474. This will absorb the balance of subsidy authorised, which is £237.