

Drainage.

The deep levels at the Thames continue to be drained by the machinery and pump in the Big Pump shaft, the whole being under the control of the Thames Drainage Board, the members of which are elected by the contributing companies and the Thames Borough and County Councils. The business is conducted in Auckland, at which place the meetings of the Board are held. The following extract from the annual statement of accounts shows the financial position of the Board, and also the contributions from the different companies assessed :—

Company.	Arrears.	Assessment.	Rebate.	Cash received.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
May Queen Gold-mining Company ...	...	1,000 0 0	125 0 0	875 0 0
Waiotahi " ...	...	645 0 0	80 12 0	564 8 0
Victoria " ...	...	600 0 0	75 0 0	525 0 0
Kuranui-Caledonian " ...	...	427 0 0	53 8 0	373 12 0
Moanataiari " ...	...	354 0 0	44 5 0	309 15 0
Cardigan " ...	...	300 0 0	37 10 0	262 10 0
Cambria " ...	...	250 0 0	31 5 0	218 15 0
Thames-Hauraki " ...	...	240 0 0	30 0 0	210 0 0
Kuranui " ...	...	90 0 0	11 5 0	78 15 0
		3,906 0 0	488 5 0	3,417 15 0
Thames Borough Council ...	10 0 0	120 0 0	..	100 0 0
Thames County Council ...	20 0 0	150 0 0	...	157 10 0
	30 0 0	£4,176 0 0	£488 5 0	£3,675 5 0

The Big Pump has worked very satisfactorily for the last four months. The quantity of coal used has been, on an average, 197 tons per month, which has been chiefly Hikurangi coal, and has been delivered in the yard at 12s. 8d. per ton; and the total cost of working the plant has been £257 per month. It was found necessary to employ two watchmen to look after the water that was put down the Tookey shaft for the purpose of ventilating the Pump shaft, so as to prevent any accident through the stoppage of the water, thereby causing the current of air to cease, and allowing the gas to accumulate in the Big Pump shaft, and getting distributed into the surrounding mines and endangering the lives of men working in them. The appointment of the men has been found to work admirably, as there has not been the slightest appearance of any gas to do any harm since they were appointed. The manager, Mr. J. Brokenshire, reports as follows: "I have the honour to inform you that the pumping operations have been carried on continuously during the past twelve months, with the following exceptions: After the annual clean-out of the water-race, pumping was resumed at the beginning of January. On the 19th January the strapping-plates on the main rods between the 300 ft. and 400 ft. levels gave way, and were replaced with stronger ones. On the 20th March the glands of the main rod at the 100 ft. level were found to be broken, and two new ones were at once obtained and placed in position. In April and May last advantage was taken of the Kuranui Caledonian Company carrying on operations through the Big Pump shaft to clean out and repair the main drive at the 400 ft. level, in order to keep the ventilation open. The balance-bobs at the surface and the 300 ft. level were getting out of repair, and had to be overhauled, repairs being completed in June last. On the 30th June the main strapping-plates connecting the surface balance-bobs with the main rod suddenly parted, and pumping had to be discontinued until the necessary repairs were effected. On the 8th July we stopped pumping to make ready for the annual boiler inspection, which took place on the 13th, pumping being resumed on the 15th. The Inspector remarked that the main boilers looked remarkably well for their age, but recommended great care be exercised in their use. He condemned the cylinder of the winding-engine, and a new one was supplied by Mr. Judd. On going down the shaft in August last to repair the guides, to enable me to get to the 500 ft. level and make preparations for fixing the new working-barrel in position, we found that several sets of timber in the main shaft had given way. These were replaced as expeditiously as possible. Another two days' stoppage occurred on the 20th and 22nd August, through an accident to the water-race. On the 18th November pumping was discontinued, in order to place the new working-barrel, clack, and seating in position. The old ones were found to be in a very bad state, and the wind-bore almost choked with broken metal. The county water was shut off on the 26th December for the annual clean-out of the water-race. Pumping was resumed this morning, advantage being taken of the stoppage to overhaul the machinery, which is now in very fair condition, considering the length of time it has been in use. The buildings are in very fair condition, with the exception of the flooring in the winding-engine house, which is very rotten, and will shortly require renewing. The working-expenses last month were £231; extra expenses for repairs, £5. The consumption of coal for the past year was 2,358 tons.

Waiotahi Creek District.

Waiotahi Mine (Area, 22 acres 3 roods 30 perches).—This mine still continues to be worked on the same lines as for the past twenty years. The veins worked on are from $\frac{1}{4}$ in. to 6 ft. in width, and the mine is kept so well opened up that payable crushing is continuous. 1,360 tons crushed yielded 1,931 oz. 9 dwt. of gold, valued at £5,227 17s. 3d. Sixteen men are employed.

Nonpareil Mine (Area, 21 acres).—Work has been carried on in this mine. The two reefs