

safe one to work in, and there was plenty of room to get out of the way of a falling face (which is not very deep). He considers the accident was due to the want of ordinary caution on the part of deceased.

Non-fatal.

A few slight accidents have been reported by the managers of various mines, but none of them appear more serious than a fractured rib.

ACCIDENTS AT DREDGES.

J. W. Bodenhausen, an employé on the Cambrian's dredge, had his leg broken on the 8th September, 1898. He was in the act of stepping on the buckets or chain when in motion, and got his foot fast between the links. On coming into contact with a guide roller, he was thrown down on the deck, sustaining the injury referred to. A trick of this sort is a senseless one, and at variance with the regulations framed for the safety of men employed on dredges, in which special mention is made of this stupid and dangerous practice.

James Hewitt, manager of the Vincent dredge, Clyde, had his right hand severely crushed on the 16th March, 1899, when replacing the cover of an oil-cup (whilst the machinery was in motion) by being caught between gear-wheels.

Alexander Patrick, employed on the Hartley and Riley dredge, near Cromwell, was accidentally drowned on the 17th March, 1899. Deceased was ashore, digging a hole for one of the mooring-posts. A wagon containing coal for the dredge having arrived, he went to assist in discharging the coal from the wagon to one of the boats. According to a report obtained from Mr. J. McGeorge (dredge-master of the No. 3 electric dredge) deceased was lowering himself over the bank by the bow-line, when he slipped into deep water. As he could not swim, he struggled about, and was caught by an eddy which hurled him into the stream. The Molyneux River at this place is very deep and swift-running, and, once caught by the current, the strongest swimmer could not hope to live against it. A life-buoy was thrown out from the dredge, but Patrick could not catch it, and the men on board were unable to render any other assistance.

I have, &c.,

JOHN HAYES, F.S. Sc.,
Inspector of Mines.

The Under-Secretary, Mines Department, Wellington.

No. 17.

MR. ALEXANDER AITKEN, Manager, Waimea-Kumara Water-races, to the UNDER-SECRETARY for MINES, Wellington.

SIR,—

Kumara, May, 1899.

I have the honour to forward the following report on the Waimea-Kumara Water-races for the year ended 31st March, 1899:—

Waimea Race.—The total sales of water from this race during the year amounted to £694 16s. 1d., and the expenditure for maintenance and repairs during the same period was £841 18s. 2d.; showing a debit balance of £147 2s. 1d. on the year's transactions.

The average number of miners supplied with water from the race during the year was 42·75, and the approximate quantity of gold obtained by them was 2,122 oz., the value of which was £8,275 16s.

The sales of water are £93 2s. 6d. less than during the preceding year, and the amount of gold obtained was 287 oz. less, or £1,119 6s. less money-value.

The difference in the sales of water and the yield of gold during the year shows a very considerable falling-off; but this is not attributable to the increasing poverty of the ground worked, but to a series of accidents to the race that stopped the supply—in one instance of the whole of the race, another the Stafford branch, and another the Tunnel Terrace branch. The time lost by breaks was greater during the past year than has been the case during many former years.

Since the deviation of the Waimea race at Kawhaka was completed no stoppages or accidents have taken place in that portion of the race, and the race throughout, so far as any one can judge, is in very good condition; but races in exceptionally bad weather are more subject to accident than most other works.

The weather during the end of January was exceptionally bad in this district, and the rivers and creeks were in higher flood than they had been for twenty years, but comparatively little damage was done to any of the races.

The expenditure on ordinary maintenance and repairs was £164 16s. 8d. greater than during the former year, and this was caused by the extraordinary number of accidents that occurred during the year, necessitating a much larger outlay in effecting repairs.

Besides the sales of water above referred to, about £115 of free water was given to the parties who could not afford to pay on account of poor washings, and had such reduction not been made the parties would have had to abandon their claims, and leave the district or add to the number of unemployed.

A considerable quantity of waste water was given to parties trying new ground commanded by the race, but this was only given after all the paying parties had been fully supplied, and was principally given during wet weather, when there was plenty of water to spare.

Waimea Main Tail-race.—Owing to financial difficulties, the trustees of this work have done very little during the past year toward the completion of the main tail-race, but this has now been arranged by an advance of sufficient money to pay off all the existing liabilities, which has now been done. The money for this purpose was advanced by four of the parties who are interested in the com-