

Wainihinihi Water-race.

During the first eight or nine months of the year Caretaker Millson was able to keep the Wainihinihi and the Waimea Water-race additional supply races in fairly good order, but eventually some of the timber sets in different sections of the tunnels became so badly decayed that it was absolutely essential that they should be replaced with new timber.

Waimea, Kumara, and Callaghan's Water-races.

The following is a summary of the revenue and expenditure of the above water-races for the year ended 31st March, 1924: Sales of water, £803 16s. 4d.; cash received, £1,188 4s. 3d. (including royalty on timber); expenditure, £1,314 19s. 11d.; approximate value of gold obtained, £3,705 4s.; average number of miners employed, 10-91. The sales of water show a decrease of £240 3s. 1d., and the cash received an increase of £497 10s. 10d., on the previous year.

In addition to the above sales, authorized free water to the value of £96 was supplied to the Payne's Gully Sluicing Company.

The total expenditure on the combined races amounted to £1,314 19s. 11d., as against £1,411 6s. 10d. for the previous year, a decrease of £96 6s. 11d. Comparing the cash received with the expenditure, the combined races show a loss of £126 15s. 8d., but from this should be deducted the sum of £96 for water supplied the Payne's Gully Sluicing Company in reduction of its account, which reduces the net loss to £30 15s. 8d.

MOUNT IDA WATER-RACE, CENTRAL OTAGO (MR. J. C. BUCHANAN, Manager).

The total sales of water during the year amounted to £472 12s. 10d., a decrease on last year of £190 9s. 9d. The expenditure on maintenance for the same period amounted to £716 11s. 8d., an increase on last year of £43 2s. 7d. The total cash received was £474 4s. 10d. The total amount owing for water supplied at 31st March, 1924, was nil. Free water was supplied for washing up to the value of £32 0s. 10d. The total value of water supplied from this race amounted to £504 13s. 8d., a decrease on last year of £217 3s. 11d. The approximate quantity of gold obtained by parties using water from this race was 497 oz., valued at £1,913 9s., an increase on last year of £161 14s. The average number of men employed was seven.

The past year from a mining point of view was the worst experienced in this locality for many years. Owing to frost during the winter months the claims were closed down for six weeks. This long winter was followed by an exceptionally dry summer: from the 19th January to the end of year there was no water available for mining purposes. During the year very little damage befell the race, which at present is in fairly good order.

ANNEXURE C.

STONE QUARRIES.

SUMMARY OF REPORT BY INSPECTOR OF QUARRIES FOR THE NORTH ISLAND (MR. JAMES NEWTON).

It has been my endeavour to visit the quarries as often as possible, and when it is remembered that the inspection district embraces almost the whole of the North Island, and for some months the Province of Canterbury in the South Island, it will readily be understood that the number of visits would not be many; besides which I have found that the clerical work during the year has increased a good deal. However, I have been enabled to visit the most important quarries twice at least, and some have been visited more; for instance, I have inspected the Auckland Harbour Board's Rangitoto quarry almost every four weeks, owing to the fact that a great variety of work was being carried out and a large number of hands have been employed throughout the whole of the year, at times as many as ninety. In a few cases quarries have been visited only once—those where the operations have extended over three or four weeks only.

I cannot pass over this report without informing you of the very great help received from most public bodies, particularly the Councillors of County Councils, who have instructed their Engineer and his assistants to give me all the help possible in order to facilitate my inspections, and in a great many instances the Councils' officers have motored me long distances and at times over very rough country under disagreeable conditions. Not only has the courtesy shown been the saving of very much time, but it has also been a very considerable saving to the Department in the matter of travelling-expenses. I may add that each year it is becoming more difficult to hire horses and horse-vehicles.

It is not necessary, I think, to enter into a statement regarding the actual conditions found at the quarries when visited (this may be found on reference to my monthly reports), with the exception that generally I have found operators quarrying in a reasonable and generally in a very satisfactory manner. I have increasingly found that inspection with a reasonable amount of exhortation has had the very desirable effect of winning quarry foremen to take more and more care in the handling and storing of explosives.

A very large percentage of the road-metal is quarried under contract with the public bodies, and I have to report that were not frequent inquiries made from such bodies, a very large amount of quarry-work would be executed with no knowledge of the same on the part of the Inspector. There is undoubtedly a laxity in complying with section 8 of the Act dealing with notification of the intention to commence quarrying, and also of the discontinuance of same. When the contractor is informed that a breach of the law has taken place, he invariably pleads that he was under the impression that it was the duty of the person who let the contract to attend to the matter.

I am indebted to public bodies for the return of yearly output, &c., required by section 6 of the 1920 Amendment Act. If these returns were only available from the "occupier" or "manager," who in a very great many instances is the contractor, it would be almost an impossibility to collect them, owing to the fact that very many of the "occupiers" are only employed for a limited period, and are here to-day, as it were, and away to-morrow, and it would be a very tedious and expensive matter to locate them.

Unfortunately, the period under review has not been free from distressing occurrences, and I am sorry to have to report that the following serious accidents have happened during the year:—

1. On the 10th February, Percy Ayden was fatally injured whilst employed in Stevenson and Son's sewerage contract, Sylvan Avenue, Mount Eden, Auckland. Whilst picking bottoms in the floor of the tunnel an explosion occurred which fatally injured him. Details of this occurrence may be found in my report of the 26th February to the Inspecting Engineer.

(2.) On the 2nd May, John Fowler was fatally injured in the Mangatuna Quarry, Tolaga Bay, owned and operated by the Uawa County Council. Fowler was struck on the head by rock projected by a blast. Full details of this accident may be had on perusal of my report to the Inspecting Engineer, dated the 12th May.

(3.) On the 27th October, Robert McLean, employed in Amners and Son's limestone quarry, Napier, was somewhat seriously injured by the premature explosion of a detonator, the cause being the wilful pricking of the interior of the detonator. (See my report thereon to the Inspecting Engineer and attached to my monthly report for November last.)

(4.) On the 31st October, P. Eady, employed by the Auckland Harbour Board in the Rangitoto Quarry, received a broken leg, the result of being struck by a falling crane-jib. (Details of the occurrence may be had on referring to my report to the Inspecting Engineer, dated the 2nd November.)