

Branch Race to Callaghan's and Middle Branch Flat.

The cash received for sales of water from this race for the year ended 31st March, 1925, was £101 12s. 8d., and the expenditure on management, gauging, maintenance, and repairs amounted to £476 1s. 3d., showing a debit balance of £374 8s. 7d. on the year's transactions.

The average number of miners supplied with water was two, and the approximate quantity of gold obtained was 258 oz., having a value of £1,012 13s., a decrease of £117 15s. on that of the previous year.

Although the Havill Brothers did a certain amount of sluicing each month during the year, they only purchased water to the value of £101 17s. 6d. This party is very seriously handicapped by lack of pressure from the Callaghan's Water-race, and has to depend on flood-water from their high-level dam to break down the ground, otherwise considerably more water would be purchased each year. Notwithstanding this rather serious disability the gold returns were highly satisfactory.

During the year a considerable amount of repair work was carried out by the staff to the flumings on this race, but the superstructure of practically all of them is in a rather bad state, and further repairs will be necessary from time to time during the ensuing year.

The cash received was £13 7s. 4d. less than the amount received during the previous year, and the expenditure for the same period showed a decrease of £8 3s. 5d.

Kumara Water-race.

The cash received for sales of water from this race amounted to £151 2s. 8d., and for royalty on timber cut on the Reservoir Reserve £560 18s. 9d., making a total revenue of £712 1s. 5d. The expenditure on maintenance and repairs amounted to £33 5s. 6d., thus showing a profit of £678 15s. 11d. on the year's transactions.

No miners were supplied with water from this race during the year, the whole of the revenue derived from sales being received from the Okuku Sawmill Company for water supplied for power-development. As the company holds fairly extensive timber areas the present sales of water should be fully maintained for some years.

Over seventy intermediate sets of timber and a considerable quantity of lining-boards were placed in position in the Kumara Head-race Tunnel during the year, but there are still certain sections that will require strict supervision and occasional repairs to minimize the probability of breaks taking place. With the exception of the sections of tunnel above referred to, the Kumara Water-race and the Nos. 1 and 2 Kapitea Reservoirs are in excellent order.

Kumara-Trans-Taramakau Water-race.

The Payne's Gully Sluicing Company was the only party supplied with water from this race during the year. This company maintains the trans-Taramakau pipe-line, and does its own gauging from the No. 1 Kapitea Reservoir, and in consequence is being supplied with water at a reduced rate.

The numerous steel sections of piping, which unfortunately are to be found along the line, have deteriorated very considerably since my last annual report, and breaks were of frequent occurrence during the year. These breaks, in addition to costing the company large sums for repairs, had the effect of stopping sluicing operations for over six months of the year, and in consequence the yield of gold showed a very decided falling-off, but considering the small quantity of material treated the returns must be looked upon as satisfactory.

The water supplied to the Payne's Gully Sluicing Company is not included in the sales, as it was supplied in lieu of cash expended by the company on repairs to the trans-Taramakau pipe-line some years ago.

With the exception of the badly oxidized steel sections of piping previously mentioned, the race and reservoir on the north side of the Taramakau River are in fairly good order.

Wainihinihi, and Waimea Additional Supply Water-races.

It is more than ten months since I made an inspection of these races, but the caretaker reports that, with the exception of a few intermediate sets of timber that are required in some of the tunnels, both races are in fairly good order.

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, 1925: Sales of water, £792 5s. 9d.; cash received, £1,230 7s. 3d. (including royalty on timber); expenditure, £1,318 19s. 5d.; approximate value of gold obtained, £2,931 19s. 6d.; average number of miners employed, 10·33. The sales of water show a decrease of £11 10s. 7d., and the cash received an increase of £42 3s. on the previous year.

The total expenditure on the combined races amounted to £1,318 19s. 5d., as against £1,314 19s. 11d. for the previous year, an increase of £3 19s. 6d.

Comparing the cash received with the expenditure, the combined races show a loss of £88 12s. 2d., but when the £96 worth of water supplied to the Payne's Gully Sluicing Company in reduction of its account is taken into consideration the races show a profit of £7 7s. 10d. on the year's transactions.

ANNEXURE C.

STONE QUARRIES.

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

It will readily be understood that owing to the extended area that has to be covered, embracing as it does the whole of the North Island with the exception of the Hauraki mining-area, the quarries situated in the outlying districts can only be visited now and again; and I do not think it is necessary to visit these areas more frequently, owing to the fact that nearly all such quarries are only operated intermittently and for a very limited time, mostly for not more than a few weeks in the year. However, I have planned to visit them as often as possible during the time at my disposal, and I have managed to visit most quarries of importance twice and some more often.

I am pleased to be able to report that an increasing regard towards carrying out the requirements of the law is apparent everywhere, even in the backblocks, and this I am persuaded is the result of the issue of the booklet entitled "Questions and Answers for Applicants for Quarry-managers or Foremen's Permits" (this book is now to be found scattered around in every district), coupled with the fact that it is now necessary for a quarry-manager to pass an examination prior to his being granted a "permit," which examination ensures that the applicant will have a reasonable knowledge of the regulations, &c. Generally, I have found the operations being carried out in a reasonably safe manner at the quarry-faces, and that much greater care is being exercised with regard to the dust nuisance at the permanent quarries. I still find, however, that section 8 is very often not complied with (this section refers to the notification of commencing and discontinuing of operations in a quarry), owing to the fact that in most cases the public bodies are not the "occupiers" of the quarry, the occupiers being mostly contractors, who operate a few weeks and then shift on. These contractors are, I may say, invariably bound by the terms of their contract to operate in accordance with the requirements of the law, and when each district is visited the county officers and others inform me where quarry-work is being undertaken.

The period under review has not been free from distressing occurrences, and I regret to have to mention the following serious accidents that have happened:—

On the 12th November a serious blasting accident happened in the Auckland City Council's Mount Eden Quarry, the result of gelignite exploding whilst James Hawkes was engaged lighting shots. The unfortunate man sustained serious injuries, losing his left hand and left eye.

On the 16th December George James Auger, owner and occupier of "Auger's quarry" Penrose, was fatally injured by being struck by a flying piece of stone from a blast in the quarry.