

## ANNEXURE B.

## STONE-QUARRIES.

## SUMMARY OF REPORT BY INSPECTOR OF QUARRIES FOR THE NORTH ISLAND.

(MR. JAMES NEWTON.)

As a general rule, I have found on inspection that those persons upon whom the Act places the responsibility for the safety of the operations in a quarry have shown a keen appreciation of the duties involved, and in very few instances have I found it necessary to complain of the manner or condition of the working surroundings in the large number of quarries that it has been my duty to inspect.

The quarries that have operated during the year number 248, and 1,458 persons have been employed. The quantity of stone won totals 1,146,364 tons, the total value of the stone at the quarry being £275,320. This year's output of stone shows a substantial decrease when compared with the output of stone for the preceding year, the decrease being 355,351 tons. The falling-off may be attributed principally to the closing down of the Auckland, Wanganui, and New Plymouth Harbour Board quarries, together with a lessened output from the Portland Cement Co.'s quarry at Portland. The permanent concrete roads in the Auckland District have also had the effect of diminishing the output of the quarries in and around Auckland, owing to the roads needing very little metal for repair purposes. A large number of the quarries have worked for only a short period of the year; some have operated intermittently; a few only can be termed permanent working-quarries.

The year's operations have not been free from distressing accidents, and I regret to have to report that one fatal and three serious accidents have occurred within the area under my jurisdiction, all of which, after making investigation, I concluded were accidental, and not blamable to a remissness regarding the law on the part of any official.

On the 9th May the quarry-manager, Marino Selak, of Rope and Thompson's Rangitoto quarry, whilst crossing over loose stone that had been blasted from the quarry-face, slipped and broke his leg.

On the 8th June, a workman named James Quickfall, employed in Pascoe's quarry, Epsom, fell and broke a small bone in his ankle. He was proceeding to a place of safety during blasting, and when he fell was fully 60 yards away from the blast.

On the 18th July, E. W. Leech, an employee of the Auckland Harbour Board, whilst engaged trucking stone from the Board's Rangitoto quarry to the quarry-wharf, had the misfortune to get his leg broken by being struck with a flying stone. Leech was proceeding toward the face of the quarry with an empty truck, and when struck by the stone was over a chain distant from the bottom of the quarry-face. In the course of preparing a site to commence boring at the top of the quarry, another workman sent a large stone over the edge of the face, which in its fall struck a ledge some 30 ft. below, causing it to break into several pieces, one of which flew through the air in the direction of Leech and struck him with sufficient force to break his leg.

On the 26th November in the Auckland City Council's Huia quarry, a workman named John Urquhart was fatally injured, the result of being struck on the head with a stone that rolled down the quarry-face. An employee, named Alfred Wayne, saw the stone descending, and called to deceased to look out. Wayne stated that deceased had ample time to get clear had he embraced the opportunity. Urquhart, however, appeared to conclude that he was sufficiently alert to dodge the stone. When the stone had almost reached the bottom of the quarry-face it struck a ledge of rock and flew through the air in the direction of deceased, who ducked to avoid it; he, however, failed in the attempt and received the full force of the blow on the side of his head, with the result that he died in a very short period of time. There had been no blasting done in the quarry for a considerable period of time prior to the occurrence, and the deceased had himself, during the morning, been engaged cleaning down the loose material from the spot where the stone left its bed.

*Tunnel Quarries.*—During the year under review a considerable amount of tunnelling has been done in and around the Auckland District, the country pierced running into thousands of feet. Some of the tunnels driven have been small in size, approximating 3 ft. 6 in. by 6 ft. high; others have been much larger, approximating 10 ft. by 7 ft. 6 in. Most of the ground driven through has been hard blue basalt, the remainder through sandy papa of sufficient hardness to require explosives to break the ground. Some of the ground has needed timber support, and generally I have found that this has been well and substantially done. Ventilation has been adequately provided by means of electrically driven centrifugal fans, the air being carried either in or out through adequate piping, according to whether the method adopted was exhaust or pressure ventilation. All tunnelling has been undertaken in connection with the city or suburban drainage schemes.

My time has been fully occupied with inspection duties and the necessary clerical work connected therewith. Examinations of applicants for a quarry-manager or foreman's permit have been conducted at times and places that have been deemed most suitable for both candidates and examiner.

I desire again to mention the fact that the officers of the various public bodies have kindly extended to me every facility at their disposal in order to enable me to inspect their several quarries. In many instances they have motored me long distances, at no small inconvenience to themselves, and so enabled me to reach quarries in out-of-the-way places.