

SESS. II.—1884.
NEW ZEALAND.

THE KUMARA SLUDGE-CHANNEL

(PAPERS RELATING TO THE COST OF).

Laid on the Table by the Hon. Mr. Stout with the leave of the House.

MEMORANDUM for the Hon. the MINISTER of MINES.

IN accordance with your instructions I send you copies of the correspondence as to the cost of construction of the Waimea-Kumara Water-race and Sludge-channel, to be laid on the table of the House. This correspondence contains Mr. Gordon's report and Mr. Pyke's letter with reference thereto.

I desire to point out that Mr. Pyke's letter of the 6th November contains strong expressions of opinion on his part, and I think that the statement that Mr. Gordon "must have misled the Committee deliberately" is rather a harsh one to make, as I am sure that nothing could have been further from his intention than to have misled the Committee on any question which was submitted to him.

I am informed by those who know the locality that Mr. Gordon is quite correct in his statement that the Waimea-Kumara Water-race and Sludge-channel can only be satisfactorily worked together; and if the Committee had wanted information on that point I am sure Mr. Gordon would have supplied it. Of course, it was not known until the report of the Committee was brought up that it was proposed to divide the management of the water-race and sludge-channel.

I forward herewith also petition from Alexander Millar and 61 miners on the subject of priority of rights and increased channel accommodation, with a further report by Mr. Gordon. These documents I recommend to be also presented, in continuation of other correspondence on the subject.

H. J. H. ELIOTT.

8th November, 1884.

The CHAIRMAN, Gold Fields and Mines Committee, to the Hon. the MINISTER of MINES.

SIR,— Gold Fields and Mines Committee-room, 23rd October, 1884.

As Chairman of the Gold Fields and Mines Committee, I have the honour to request that you will ascertain from Mr. Gordon, Inspecting Engineer of the Mines Department, the meaning of the second paragraph in his report,* namely: "The Kumara Water-race and Sludge-channel are only a small portion of the water-races belonging to the Government in this locality, and they are all so connected together that it is impossible to separate the one from the other. Therefore, if the recommendations of the Gold Fields Committee are given effect to, it means handing over the whole of the Waimea-Kumara Water-race and Sludge-channel—works that have cost in construction £173,143 11s. 8d."

What are the works estimated at £173,143? These were not even referred to by Mr. Gordon when before the Committee, and the statement in Mr. Gordon's report comes as a surprise to members of Committee. The "collateral advantages," so-called, go to the local bodies now, and any change in the management will not alter their final disposition.

I have, &c.,

VINCENT PYKE,

The Hon. the Minister of Mines.

Chairman, Gold Fields and Mines Committee.

The Hon. the MINISTER of MINES to the CHAIRMAN, Gold Fields and Mines Committee.

SIR,— Mines Department, Wellington, 27th October 1884.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 23rd instant. In reply, I transmit for your information a copy of a report by Mr. Gordon, Inspecting Engineer, showing the cost of the different works in connection with the construction of the Waimea-Kumara Water-race and Sludge-channel.

I have, &c.,

The Chairman, Gold Fields Committee,
House of Representatives, Wellington.

J. BALLANCE,
Minister of Mines.

MEMORANDUM for the UNDER-SECRETARY, Mines Department, Wellington. *Re* Kumara Water-race and Sludge-channel Report.

Mines Department, Wellington, 24th October, 1884.

IN reply to the letter of the Chairman of the Gold Fields and Mines Committee of the 23rd instant, forwarded to the Hon. the Minister of Mines, I have the honour to state that the sum mentioned in my report on Kumara Water-race and Sludge-channel, namely, £173,143 11s. 8d., is made up as follows:—

Waimea portion of water-race	...	...	...	£118,575	15	2
Kumara portion of water-race	...	...	...	37,367	4	0
Kumara Sludge-channel	...	...	...	17,200	12	6
Total	...	...	...	£173,143	11	8

It was only on the two latter items that I was questioned when giving evidence before the Gold Fields and Mines Committee.

The first portion of these works was commenced about two and a half years before the Kumara Gold Field broke out. The original scheme was to bring in a water-supply to the Waimea district, which is on the opposite side of the ridge from the watershed of the Kumara District.

The revenue derived from the Waimea portion of the water-race came far below expectations; but when the Kumara Gold Field broke out it opened up a means of using the surplus water.

Although the Waimea and Kumara Water-races appear as separate undertakings, their supply comes from the same source, and they are so connected together that their administration cannot be separated; they are therefore worked conjointly, and known now as the Waimea-Kumara Water-race.

HENRY A. GORDON,
Inspecting Engineer.

The CHAIRMAN, Gold Fields and Mines Committee, to the Hon. the MINISTER of MINES.

SIR,—

Wellington, 6th November, 1884.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, dated the 27th October (but which only reached me yesterday), in *re* the report of Mr. Inspecting Engineer Gordon upon the report of the Gold Fields and Mines Committee; and which you must pardon me for saying is an unprecedented innovation on the practice of Parliament.

Mr. Gordon's explanation is not satisfactory. The only public works considered, or which were brought under the consideration of the Committee, were the Kumara Water-race and Sludge-channel (or tail-race), of the value, as specified by Mr. Gordon, of £54,567.

The Waimea Water-race has nothing whatever to do with the report of the Committee, the recommendations of which it is my duty to impress most strongly upon the Government, and the more so because of the strangely-developed hostility of the Inspecting Engineer.

If the Waimea Water-race is a part of the whole scheme, Mr. Gordon must have misled the Committee deliberately, as he was asked to make a statement without any restriction touching the business before the Committee. His statement *now* is that he was not "questioned" respecting a matter of which the Committee as a body had no knowledge. But it is evident that he considered the matter of importance, and, if he thought so after the inquiry only, he has laid himself open to the charge of having misled the Committee by the concealment of necessary information.

I have, &c.,

VINCENT PYKE,
Chairman, Gold Fields and Mines Committee.

The Hon. the Minister of Mines.