

The result of the investigations of the committee shows that, when numbers four and five channels are completed, and assuming that the present liberal supply will obtain, there will not be sufficient water by about fifty heads per day. To meet this deficiency it is proposed to purchase Mr. Holmes's rights, two of whose dams can be made, at a moderate outlay, to conserve a large quantity of water which now runs to waste during wet weather. Also, by making the head-race wider for about two miles and a half, a more rapid outflow would be obtained. In addition to this, Mr. Holmes can, at the present time, supply about five more parties per day, averaging about ten heads per party.

Another advantage is that the water now owned by Mr. Holmes can, at a cost of about £100, be turned into the Government race at the present end of the Government head-race tunnel. By this means shifts could be arranged to greater advantage than is possible at the present time, as in many cases one shift is overcrowded while another may be but half filled up, thereby causing a loss to the miners, and also to the State.

Other benefits to be derived from the purchase are as follows:—

To those miners now purchasing water from Mr. Holmes, an immediate reduction of 40 per cent., thereby enabling them to work ground which could not be worked under present conditions. A reduction to those miners would also be a direct benefit to the district, as the purchasing-power of the miners interested would be increased, and the increased area made available for working by the reduction would give a longer lease of life to the field, and at the same time prevent a large number of miners being thrown on the labour-market.

It may, perhaps, appear strange that the owner of a property returning an income of £2,556 per annum should be disposed to sell for so low a sum as £6,000, but the real facts of the case are that Mr. Holmes does not at the present time sell more than one-half of the water at his disposal; also, as the general trend of mining is in the direction of Kapitea Hill, and Mr. Holmes's race being on the other side of the field, a large expenditure would be entailed on Mr. Holmes in the direction of race-cutting and iron-piping, whereas the Government have already a race cut in the indicated direction. Nothing more would be required than to turn the water into the Government race as already indicated. We desire to point out that any money expended in the direction of raising the embankments of dams or cutting races would be amply repaid by the increased storage and sales of water.

With regard to the difference in price of water charged by Government and Mr. Holmes, according to the return as shown in the last year's Goldfields Report, the average price paid by miners using Government water was £1 10s. 8d. per head; in addition to this at least 15 per cent. extra water is given by what is known as big measure over and above the actual amount paid for, while those who are using Mr. Holmes's water are charged £2 per head.

In conclusion, we would respectfully ask your honourable House to give this question your earnest consideration, as it is a matter of vital importance to this goldfield.

And your petitioners will ever pray.

GEORGE MORRIS, President of Executive.  
JOHN HAY.  
JAMES R. HACKITT.  
THOMAS STEVENSON.  
FRANCIS D. PAYN.  
THOMAS RICE.  
SAMUEL HARVEY, Secretary.

REPORT ON PETITION of KUMARA MINERS' ASSOCIATION, No. 301, Goldfields and Mines,  
Session 1895.

Mines Department, Wellington, 3rd September, 1895.

In the opinion of the Mines Department the purchase of Holmes's water-race would not be of advantage to the colony, for the following reasons:—

1. That the level of Holmes's water-race would not permit of the water being taken into the Government race at the end of the head-race tunnel, as stated by the petitioners.

2. That, although Mr. Holmes's race may possibly have a carrying-capacity of twenty-four sluice-heads as stated, and that only half this quantity is sold, as a fact it frequently occurs during dry weather that Mr. Holmes has to obtain water from the Government race for his customers.

3. That the statements in the petition as to the price charged for water from the Government race are based on a wrong assumption, the price being £2 per head, and not £1 10s.

4. That the area which Mr. Holmes's race commands adjoins the front of the terrace facing the Teremakau River, where the best portion of the ground has been worked; and before water could be used from this race, even for flushing purposes, a large expenditure would have to be incurred in the construction of pipes and syphons.

5. That, even according to their own statements, the petitioners are not correct as to the probable revenue of the race being £2,556 per annum; as previously pointed out, only half the water that the race is capable of carrying can be sold; the revenue would accordingly be only a little over £1,100 for twenty-four heads for 280 working-days. Even this amount could not be constantly relied upon, as dry weather has to be taken into consideration; and lastly, the price named in the petition is far in excess of the value of the property to the colony, as the petitioners point out a large expenditure would have to be incurred before the water could be fully utilised.

The petition is returned herewith.

H. J. H. ELLIOTT, Under-Secretary.