purchasing?—I do not think they would get a penny. I think it would mean a loss. Mr. Holmes says there is an agreement between him and the Government not to lower the price; but the moment the Government take it up there will be a deputation asking for water at a lower price, so that the Government will lose by it.

157. *Mr. W. Kelly.*] Suppose Mr. Holmes reduced the price of water now?—I suppose the Government would have to reduce it also.

158. *Mr. Guinness.*] I know that they tried to get the Government, for five or six years, to reduce it, and they never did; and why should it be reduced now?—[No answer given.]

159. *Mr. R. McKenzie.*] Do you think it would be a loss to the colony if the price was reduced at Kumara?—I do not know about the colony, but it would be to the Government.

160. Do you think any more men would be employed if they could get cheaper water?—I think it is a debatable question.

161. *Mr. Mills.*] If the Government were to purchase this race, are the Committee to understand that it would not increase the number of miners in the district and afford more work?—I do not think it would increase it to an appreciable extent.

[Reference was here made to the report and plan.]

162. *Hon. Mr. Cadman.*] Will you give us a rough idea of the expense, supposing the Government were to purchase this race and make a complete waterworks scheme of the whole thing?—I could not even give a rough idea of that, because a different phase has been placed on the question beyond what I knew before. If water had to be taken from the level of Holmes's race and run through the Kumara field, opposite to where the men are working below Dillmanstown—to take the water from Holmes's race (present race) and to get flushing-water into the flat tunnels—I could not tell the cost. It would require a great length of pipes to do that.

163. To put the matter fairly before the Committee, from what you have seen now, it would not cost as much as you anticipated?—No, certainly not, if it could be taken in here from Cashman's reservoir. It would only be a question of what it would cost if it is at a high enough level to connect Cashman's dam with the Government race at the end of the tunnel.

164. *Mr. Mills.*] In a rough way, can you tell how much it would amount to for, say, half a mile?—Possibly, about £300. I know Callaghan's cost that. For twenty-four heads of water between cutting, &c.

TUESDAY, 1ST OCTOBER, 1895.

Mr. ALEXANDER AITKEN examined.

1. *The Chairman.*] You are Mr. Alexander Aitken, engineer in charge of the Kumara Water-race?—Yes; I am called manager.

2. You received a wire from me, asking you to inspect Holmes's race, take the levels, and obtain all information you could, and then come to Wellington to give evidence before this Committee?—I did.

3. And you are prepared to state to the Committee the information that is in your possession as to the state of the race, the cost of deviation, the advantages that are likely to arise from the deviation, and any other information the Committee may desire?—The first instruction I got was about the branch race. I had two telegrams, and the second was about a general inspection. I took the levels from what is called Cashman's reservoir to the high-water race at Kumara and the mouth of the tunnel. The mouth of the outlet-tunnel is 400ft. above sea-level, and the top of Cashman's dam is 481ft. above sea-level. The outlet from Cashman's dam is 17ft. lower than that—that is to say, that 481ft. is the level of the dam, and 17ft. lower is the tunnel to empty the dam. The outlet from the tunnel going into Kumara is 400ft. above sea-level, so that there is about 60ft. to spare, after allowing a proper fall for the race. The length of the branch race would be 46 chains, and it would cost about £200 to construct, and £50, I reckon, for making provision that in pouring the water into our race it did not do any damage. This would still be within the original estimate of £250. It would require a considerable amount of timber-work to prevent it from scouring. We should have to use timber, as we have no suitable stone there. All the levels of the Government dams are given on this plan. [Plan produced.] The highest-up reservoir, called Holmes's dam, and also known as Okuku Reservoir, is about 700ft. above sea-level; the next reservoir coming down is what is called the Bell's Creek Reservoir, is 558ft. above sea-level; and there is a second one in Bell's Creek, known as No. 2, which is about 20ft. lower, or 538ft. There is about three and a quarter miles of race between that and Cashman's dam (Holmes's race), and that dam is 481ft. above the sea-level. Our highest reservoir in connection with Kumara Race is 488ft. above the sea-level: that is the loop-line dam. Our smaller reservoir is 453ft., and the mouth of the tunnel 400ft. above sea-level. There is an excellent race connecting the Okuku Creek with the No. 2 dam —a very good race, and large. The No. 2 dam is in good condition. There is no race connecting No. 2 with No. 3; the water just takes the creek-bed, and does not require a race. There are about three and a quarter miles from the lower Bell Creek Reservoir, or No. 3, to Cashman's dam. The upper mile of this race is much larger than the lower two miles. They started, I think, to make a much larger race, but only widened about a mile. This race (Holmes's race) is about 4ft. wide from the lower Bell Creek Reservoir for a mile in the direction of Cashman's dam. From there for the other two and a quarter miles to Cashman's dam it is only 3ft. wide, and this portion of the race limits the quantity of water that can be carried. It will only carry eleven heads, and will require (the lower portion) to be widened. From Cashman's reservoir to the flats below the water drops 90ft., and that 90ft. is at present made use of by McConnon's sawmill—or, at least, 50ft. or 60ft. of it. From Cashman's dam downwards the race will carry from twenty-two to twenty-four heads. I have actually measured the quantity of water when testing some pipes, and that is the quantity I found in the race. The Holmes race ends at a place called Nardoo Flat, just opposite the Town of Kumara. I think that is all I can give of the description of the race.