

continuing off and on, very little work was done until the 17th August. On the 19th started the miners on the east side of Main Gully; those on the west side to clean out the branch race about four miles, from Coal-pit Dam to Enterprise Terrace distributing-dam, and a large box in the main race that required renewing built up with heavy snow-grass tussock and sods, leaving the box in its position.

To do away for all time with low timber flumes in the main race, am having them, when requiring renewing, built up in this manner, as this can be done while the water is running in the race. The box is left in its position. Also cleaned out the branch race supplying the Spec Gully miners.

The month of September turned out pretty rough—snowing, raining, and freezing—and there was a full supply. On the 15th there was a fall of snow of 5 in. in the township. The supply kept good until the 23rd November, when, on account of the extremely dry weather, the miners, from this on until I started with the widening and cleaning on the 9th January, were on less than half-time.

At the beginning of January had the main race from Coal-pit to Spec Gully cleared out a length of about six miles by the miners supplied from this section. The supply getting so low, had all the dams filled, and started on the 9th January with the cleaning of the race from Coal-pit outwards, employing the whole of the miners that would work, as well as others. As only cleaning had to be done until Store Gully, beyond the Wedderburn siphon, was reached, the work was light, and soon finished. Round Store Gully had to be graded, widened, and strengthened in parts, until the Idaburn was reached, a length of four miles.

From the Idaburn to Hill's Creek, where it was widened last year, the cleaning was very light. Across Hill's Creek Flat a length of about four miles to within about a mile of the flume across the East Marionburn being full wide, all it wanted was a good side trimming and cleaning. From this on to about a mile beyond Pearce's Gorge Creek, a length of about eight miles, had to be widened from 4 ft. to nearly 6 ft., and in parts, where required, strengthened. A good length of this was in rock. From this on to the head it is sufficiently wide (4 ft.), for when the water is wanted it is not there to fill a larger race. By the end of March the work was finished, and this length of the race (forty miles) widened and strengthened where seen it was required.

The season has been much the driest that I have seen since 1893.

BLACKSTONE HILL WATER-RACE.

The total sales of water from this race during the year amounted to £21 17s. 9d.; the total cash received was £21 17s. 9d. The total cost of maintenance and repairs was £2. The number of men supplied with water was five—Johnston and Sons (three) being the only ones until December, when the Dillon Bros. made a start. As the supply got so low, they only received ten days' free water of two heads, of the value of £1 17s. 6d. (Naseby miner's rate). They must have a good deal of faith in the country they propose to work, as they have gone to an expenditure of about £200 in laying an 11 in. siphon pipe-line across Peg-leg Gully.

The East Marionburn, from which the Blackstone Hill Race is supplied, is much the largest along the course of the Mount Ida Race supply, its intake being considerably higher than the Mount Ida Race. I widened it from 3 ft. to 5 ft., so that, as the creeks from this inward supplying the Mount Ida get low, the surplus, after supplying the Blackstone Hill demand, can be sent into the Mount Ida and on to the Naseby miners. It was widened for a length of about 30 chains, 21 of which is in rock. It having a grade of 12 ft. to the mile, the 5 ft. in width by 2 ft. in depth will take all the water in the creek except in flood-time.

ALEXANDRA WATER-RACE.

The total sales of water from this race during the year amounted to £161 10s. The expenditure on maintenance and repairs for the same period was £398 17s. The total cash received was £161 10s. On account of payment in advance, free water to the value of £88 was supplied. The total value of water supplied from this race during the year amounted to £249 10s.

From this race had water turned on to one of the farmers in Ida Valley on the 6th May, but on the 27th a heavy snowstorm set in, filling the race for miles with snowdrift. Hard frost immediately following, no water could be got along it. A slight thaw setting in in the second week in July, I tried to get the water along, but frost during the night would freeze it up, tearing down the sides on the steep sidelings, causing two small breaks, when it had to be turned off again, the ground being so hard that no material could be got to repair it. The frost was so hard at the dam that the maintenance man, on going up to close down the valve, could not turn the screw either one way or the other, from the effect of trying to keep the water in the race in July. When turned on again, on the 17th August, found it leaking so badly that it had to be turned out again on the 26th. A break in the masonwork (dry stone building), 12 ft. long and 10 ft. deep, was repaired, and the water was turned on again on the 30th.

During the month of November there were thirteen miners at work. Two parties started sluicing at Black's No. 3, but by the end of January the dam ran dry. J. Buchanan, the man in charge, with the lower maintenance man and two others, started to clean out stuff brought into the newly constructed portion from the upper side, the upper maintenance man repairing leaks. When finished with the cleaning the maintenance men were kept repairing the upper section, as from its construction it leaked badly in many places. After cleaning out the newly constructed portion, when the opportunity occurred, sent about five heads along it, to test whether, where constructed through the rock, it would be tight. Found in several places a leakage, but this, in a few days, had, on account of the muddy water, practically tightened up, and, as it has a strong grip of the solid, it is hardly possible to at any time break away.

A first-class job of the construction and grading of this section has been made.

I have, &c.,

R. MURRAY, Manager.