

GOVERNMENT WATER-RACES.

The Waimea-Kumara and Mount Ida water-races supplied sixty-three miners with water for alluvial gold-mining, by which gold to the approximate value of £15,075 was obtained. The cash received for water sold amounted to £2,430, and the expenditure on the upkeep and management of the races was £3,221.

COAL-MINERS' RELIEF FUND.

The following is a statement of the accounts of the fund during the last two financial years :—

	Year ended 31st March, 1917.	Year ended 31st March, 1918.
	£	£
Contributions	1,980	1,655
Allowance on account of accidents, &c. ..	1,427	1,193
Balance carried forward ..	8,172	8,980

It is gratifying to observe that the available funds are gradually increasing.

STONE-QUARRIES.

The provisions of the Stone-quarries Act, 1910, are now being enforced. Unfortunately there is no provision in the Act for returns of output by quarry-owners, so the statistics available are incomplete. The Inspectors have, however, been able to collect some returns which show that during 1917 at least 150 quarries, employing 1,000 persons, were in operation, and these produced an output of not less than 1,040,000 tons of stone.

During the year two persons lost their lives by quarry accidents.

ABANDONMENT OF UNCONSTRUCTED AND DISUSED WATER-RACES.

With the decline of alluvial gold-mining in some parts of the South Island a number of water-races held under mining privileges are no longer in operation, and have become practically abandoned. In some cases such water rights are of value for irrigation or other industrial purposes. I have therefore taken steps to have the registers purged of unused titles, so that the rights may revert to the Crown. Reports have been obtained from Inspectors of Mines upon most of the water-races which appear in the Wardens' Court registers, and in some cases proceedings have been taken under the Mining Act for striking such races off the registers. A considerable amount of work has been involved in these investigations, and progress has been slow; but, notwithstanding this, good work is being done towards purging the registers of obsolete titles. The number cancelled already exceeds one hundred.

TABLES AND REPORTS.

The usual statistical tables and departmental reports are appended.