

ANNEXURE B.

STONE-QUARRIES.

SUMMARY OF REPORT BY INSPECTOR OF QUARRIES FOR THE NORTH ISLAND.

(MR. JAMES NEWTON.)

Taking into consideration the dangerous nature of the industry, I have to state that during inspection of the quarries I have, with very few exceptions indeed, found that reasonable care in operating the stone is being taken.

The quantity of stone won during the year under consideration in my inspection district has been 1,069,613 tons, which amount gives a decreased output when compared with last year of 76,751 tons. This may be accounted for when it is remembered that a less number of quarries has been worked, the decrease being forty-eight, besides which a few of the larger quarries have produced very little stone during the year—namely, the Wanganui and New Plymouth Harbour Board quarries—whilst the Auckland Harbour Board's quarry has been idle throughout the whole of the period. The number of persons employed in the production of the stone (1,369) has been less by eighty-nine than was employed last year, and the value of the stone won shows a decrease of £5,888. The greater number of quarries worked only won stone for a short period of the year, others intermittently, whilst a lesser number operated more or less permanently, consequently the employment to the persons engaged is not of a permanent nature.

The following accidents coming within the provisions of section 4 of the Stone-quarries Amendment Act, 1922, happened during the year under review :—

On the 22nd May an employee in Pascoe's quarry situated at Epsom, named J. Quickfall, was injured by being struck by a small stone falling from the quarry-face on to his shoulder, causing a slight fracture of the shoulder-blade.

On the 29th June Richard C. Flay had his leg broken, the result of falling foul of a travelling belt whilst employed at Guillard's quarry, situated in the Hunua Gorge.

On the 20th December a workman employed in the Cook County's quarry situated at Waerenga-o-Kuri had his hand hurt, the result of a rolling stone striking it, necessitating the amputation of his third finger.

Tunnel Quarries.—During the year a considerable amount of inspection has had to be given to underground work, tunnelling in the Auckland district having been continuous throughout the year. Most of them have been driven through hard basalt rock, necessitating very little timber support. I have generally found on inspection that this class of work has been satisfactorily undertaken. Care is taken in the handling and use of the necessary explosives, and the drives are adequately provided with ventilation. Other tunnel quarries that have been inspected are situated in Wellington and Wanganui districts.

During the year a large number of applications from persons wishing to be examined for quarry-manager's permits has been dealt with, the examinations being conducted at times and places most suitable both to the candidates and the examiner.

I desire again to mention the fact that the officers of the various public bodies have kindly extended to me every facility at their disposal in order to enable me to inspect their several quarries. At great inconvenience to themselves they have motored me considerable distances over rough roads into the back country, and so enabled me to inspect their quarries expeditiously.