

JAMES ALEXANDER POND: AN AUCKLAND CHEMIST INVOLVED IN MINING

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Abstract: *Born in London, James Alexander Pond arrived in New Zealand at the age of 18. With a background in chemistry, he was interested in scientific topics from an early age. Although his first experience of life in the colony was as a small farmer, from 1868 onwards he was involved in mining, first at Thames, an involvement that would continue for the rest of his life.*

After becoming a chemist in Auckland in the 1860s, he was appointed a public analyst two decades later. From the 1880s onwards he was involved in a wide range of scientific investigations, and was active in the New Zealand and Auckland Institutes. Much of his research was intended to assist farmers. He invented a butter box that was so successful that his patent was stolen in Victoria, and the private company that manufactured them was very profitable. Like others with fond memories of 'Home', he assisted acclimatization.

One of his many scientific interests was geology, which involved his assaying ore and assisting mining on many fields; he was an early enthusiast for the use of cyanide in treating ore. From 1880 onwards he was associated, on and off, with mining in the Te Aroha district, analyzing its ore, being consulted about treatment processes, and from 1888 onwards acquiring interests in claims. Other mining investments covered most of the Hauraki fields. From 1907 onwards, he was involved in two under-capitalized failures at Waiorongomai, the Waitawheta Gold Prospecting Company and the Waitawheta Gold Mining Company. Subsequently he invested in the Bendigo mine and battery there, which was no more successful. He introduced the oil flotation process to this battery, which he would retain (because he could not sell it) until his death. Although participating in the renewed mining of the district during the Depression, his mining was minimal, and although he died a relatively well-off man, this was not because of his involvement in Te Aroha mining.

FAMILY BACKGROUND AND EARLY YEARS IN NEW ZEALAND

James Alexander Pond, who at least in his early years preferred to be known as Alexander,¹ was born in London in 1846, the youngest of six children born to a dye master also named James Alexander and Frances Sophia, née Bacon.² His father introduced him to chemistry ‘at an early age’.³ His obituary stated that after beginning ‘his business career with a London chemical firm’ he ‘spent some time as a research chemist to an American petroleum company’.⁴ Starting as an errand boy in this large London firm ‘he acquired sufficient knowledge’ to obtain this research job in America.⁵ At the age of 18, he sailed to New Zealand from his home in ‘dear old Warlingham’,⁶ in Surrey, to the south of London but now near its outskirts,⁷ arriving in Auckland at the end of August 1865. Expecting never to return, he was ‘sorrowful to leave dear ones in England’.⁸ His reason for migrating was practical: ‘the hopes of brighter prospects in another land’, which he expected to be ‘the land of promise’.⁹ His diary of the voyage revealed a scientific interest in the details of sailing and in the marine life he observed.¹⁰ He was delighted with his new country from his first sight of the northern-most capes of the North Island. ‘Now as we flew past the green and towering cliffs we feasted our eyes on the lovely sight. Islands appeared and disappeared as we bounded on toward the harbour’.¹¹

Presumably because of his parents’ fears for his safe arrival, just before his departure he was baptized into the Church of England at the advanced age of 18.¹² As in England, he attended services every Sunday,

¹ J.A. Pond, ‘Voyage to New Zealand’, Diary, 8 May 1885-1 September 1885, with concluding account to 30 January 1866 (Typescript, University of Waikato Library), p. 57.

² Death Certificate of J.A. Pond, 8 June 1941, 1941/18603, BDM; Brian R. Davis, ‘James Alexander Pond’, *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography: vol. 2: 1870-1900* (Wellington, 1993), p. 392; Wendy Swallow to Philip Hart, 21 December 1905, email.

³ Davis, ‘Pond’, pp. 392-393.

⁴ *New Zealand Herald*, 9 June 1941, p. 9.

⁵ Davis, ‘Pond’, p. 393.

⁶ Pond, ‘Voyage’, entry for 21 May 1865.

⁷ Ordnance Survey, *Touring Atlas of Great Britain*, 5 ed. (London, 1991), p. 32.

⁸ Pond, ‘Voyage’, entry for 8 May 1865; see also entries for 15, 23 May, 6 July.

⁹ Pond, ‘Voyage’, entries for 8 May, 29 August 1865.

¹⁰ For example, Pond, ‘Voyage’, entries for 8 June, 22 August, 23 August 1865.

¹¹ Pond, ‘Voyage’, entry for 29 August 1865.

¹² Davis, ‘Pond’, p. 393.

and recorded the scripture reading chosen for the sermons.¹³ He would remain an Anglican until his death.¹⁴

Pond had a land grant awaiting him,¹⁵ but did not settle on it. Instead, from September 1865 to January 1866 he worked in the bush at Komokoriki, south of the Araparera River, near the southern arm of the Kaipara Harbour,¹⁶ with friends who had preceded him to the colony.¹⁷

The first thing I wanted to do was to become a bushman and to be that you must be able to fell, to log, to cross cut, to find your way through the trackless bush, to swim, to make and bake your own bread, to wash your own clothes, to hunt, to know the likely spots for eels, to run through the bush in following the dogs (very difficult), to find food in the bush, to milk, to fence, to split posts, nails and slabs and several minor qualifications. The first thing I went in for was milking and tending cattle in general.¹⁸

He recorded being ‘completely whitewashed’ before becoming ‘quite adept’ at milking the four cows.¹⁹ ‘Each week I made the butter, so you see, though at the time I was only a “cockatoo” – a “new chum,” I used to do pretty well’.²⁰

Six days after arriving in New Zealand, he ‘had the pleasure of seeing a native village’ near the head of the Waitemata harbour, as he reported to his family in a description that indicated he knew some Maori words already:

There were 4 large Whares and a wooden house. Fancy a long raupo home about 40 feet by 10 feet no chimney as hole in the roof but 2 small doors about 3 feet high and 1 1/2 feet broad. After warmly welcoming us by the usual salutation of “Tenaque” and shaking us severely by the hand, they invited us into their Whare. There were only 3 women and 2 old men at the time. We

¹³ For example, Pond, ‘Voyage’, entries for 14, 21, 28 May, 25 June 1865.

¹⁴ Death Certificate of James Alexander Pond, 8 June 1941, 1941/18603, BDM.

¹⁵ Land Grants for Immigrants, Register of Grantees 1863-1868, Land Grant no. A4136, BAAZ 4115/1c, ANZ-A.

¹⁶ *Wises New Zealand Guide: A gazetteer of New Zealand*, 7 ed. (Auckland, 1979), p. 191.

¹⁷ Pond, ‘Voyage’, entries for 2-5 September 1865 and concluding account to 31 January 1866.

¹⁸ Pond, ‘Voyage’, p. 51.

¹⁹ Pond, ‘Voyage’, pp. 51-53.

²⁰ Pond, ‘Voyage’, p. 53.

all entered and the women all began filling and lighting their pipes and handing them around. You can't refuse out of courtesy and to wipe the stem of the pipe when they take it out of their mouths and hand it to you is an unpardonable act. It was so pleasant. The women cooked us some potatoes and kumera (sweet potatoes) and boiled some water with which we made tea. About 4 pm the men came from fishing and then we went through a pleasant course of "Tenaques" and pump handling (their way of shaking hands). You remember a friend of Charlie's, a Mr P. who gives your arm one agonising throw. Fancy that being repeated 20 times. As dusk came on the women went out and cut some long fern which they laid in a corner of the Whare and covered with mats made of flax strips. We unrolled our swags and made a pillow of the contents, rolling ourselves in our blankets. Then passed a happy night. The fleas were as numerous as the "sand on the sea shore," the mosquitoes about one half; then a pleasant company of Maoris yelling, chattering, chanting and smoking, each trying to outdo the other in raising a cloud of smoke, while at each end of the Whare was a huge fire raising a pleasant quantity of smoke; by laying flat most of smoke escapes through the open doors but to get up is a sure and certain way of being flabbergasted.²¹

After this sleepless night, although the next morning was a 'heavy dark-looking' one he 'could not think of another night there', and his party departed to the valley of Komokoriki.²² He noted the meaning of one place name.²³ When living at Komokoriki, they 'often had visitors in the shape of Maoris. Eight or ten would come up and buy tobacco, soap, paper and matches. We often gave them a treat of tea and bread. I was able to speak with them partly by their language, my language and the language of signs'.²⁴

Despite these seemingly cordial relations, Pond feared his Maori neighbours. One night they

were awakened by the barking of the dogs. The violence with which they barked made me anticipate danger. I quietly slipped out of bed and partly dressed, then quietly feeling around I found the gun. I knew both barrels were loaded and after feeling about a little I found the caps. I did not think it wise to strike a light in

²¹ Pond, 'Voyage', entry for 5 September 1865.

²² Pond, 'Voyage', entry for 6 September 1865.

²³ Pond, 'Voyage', p. 50.

²⁴ Pond, 'Voyage', p. 53.

case it should be a Maori. After putting in two new caps and sticking the pig knife in my belt, I went to the door.²⁵

What he found was a large eel he had caught earlier trying to escape.²⁶ His fear of Maori led to a logical conclusion; having served in a volunteer unit in London, in April 1866 he enlisted in the No. 4 Company of the Auckland Rifle Volunteers as a corporal, attending 30 parades until the end of June 1868, and ceasing to be involved four months later, when he was a sergeant.²⁷ He retained an interest in pre-European contact Maori in particular, in 1890 addressing the Auckland Institute on 'The Foods of the Ancient Maori'.²⁸

As another example of his scientific curiosity, having killed the eel that had caused his nighttime alarm he weighed and measured it. 'By his pedigree I found he was great grandfather to all the eels in the river and by statistics and tradition handed me by other eels I found he was born round the year AD 1100'.²⁹ Another example was his taking two 'young ladies' into the bush fern hunting. 'We all had rare fun, climbing up almost perpendicular heights and clipping down into the deepest parts after ferns, of which there were beautiful specimens'.³⁰

INVOLVEMENT IN MINING IN THE THAMES DISTRICT

On 7 May 1868 his first miner's right was issued for the Thames goldfield.³¹ His obituary recalled that he 'worked on one of the richest gold patches in the district in the Golden Crown',³² at Tapu, to the north of Thames. In June 1868, he bought a quarter-share in it for £12, as a sleeping

²⁵ Pond, 'Voyage', p. 55.

²⁶ Pond, 'Voyage', pp. 54-56.

²⁷ 'Nominal Roll of the Persons enrolled and serving in the No. 4 Co. Auckland Rifle Volunteers', Army Department, ARM 41, 1874/1ai, 1874/1aj, 1874/1ak, ANZ-W; *New Zealand Herald*, 9 June 1941, p. 9; Davis, 'Pond', p. 393.

²⁸ *New Zealand Herald*, 15 July 1890, p. 4, 19 July 1890, Supplement, p. 1.

²⁹ Pond, 'Voyage', p. 56.

³⁰ Pond, 'Voyage', p. 53.

³¹ Thames Warden's Court, Register of Miners' Rights 1867-1868, no. 5458, BACL 14358/1a, ANZ-A.

³² *New Zealand Herald*, 9 June 1941, p. 9.

partner, giving him one twenty-eighth of the interests.³³ In April and May he had bought two quarter-shares, again as a sleeping partner, in the Stonewall Jackson, the second for £15,³⁴ and in June a quarter-share, again as a sleeping partner, for £8, in the Flying Dutchman, both at Tapu.³⁵ How much, if any, physical mining he did is unknown. Always described as a 'little man',³⁶ which may or may not imply a lack of strength, no reports of his mining have been traced. In June 1869, he had to defend himself on the charge that, although supposed to have 'represented' another miner's share in the Californian Route at Tinker's Gully, Thames, for two days, he had not done any work. He explained that he had been working, building a hut, and expected to be paid, and also stated that he had worked on another claim previously;³⁷ whether this work was underground mining was not made clear. Late in 1872, he was warned that his seven shares in the Una Company would be forfeited if the first call, of sixpence, remained unpaid.³⁸

In 1891, Richard Mills Hawkes, an early settler at Tapu,³⁹ recalled Pond living there in 'the very early days, and I can tell you he had not a very rosy time of it here. I well remember his camp back of Holts,⁴⁰ somewhere on the puddling company's ground. But, oh, the crowd that was round him on that hill'. Hawkes had seen many men in places like seaports, 'but that little lot', known as 'the Holy Boys', camped around Pond 'took the pale'⁴¹ and 'were good enough for anything. Well, I can assure you that Mr Pond told me, they never molested him at any time, and it was all due to his quiet winning ways and readiness to assist any unfortunate fellow who met

³³ Thames Warden's Court, Claims Register May-June 1868, folio 276, BACL 14397/1a; Register of Agreements 1868, folio 25, BACL 14417/2a, ANZ-A.

³⁴ Thames Warden's Court, Claims Register May-June 1868, folio 373, BACL 14397/1a; Register of Agreements 1868, folio 22, BACL 14417/2a, ANZ-A.

³⁵ Thames Warden's Court, Claims Register June-August 1868, no. 477, BACL 14397/2a; Register of Agreements 1868, folio 29, BACL 14417/2a, ANZ-A.

³⁶ For example, *Observer*, 25 November 1882, p. 169.

³⁷ Thames Warden's Court, Warden's Notebook March-June 1869, entry for 24 June 1869, BACL 14457/1b, ANZ-A.

³⁸ *Thames Advertiser*, 12 November 1872, p. 2.

³⁹ See R.M. Hawkes, 'The Early Days of Tapu', *Thames Advertiser*, 9 June 1891, pp. 1, 4, 10 June 1891, p. 4, 11 June 1891, p. 1.

⁴⁰ In 1891, Francis George Holt was a miner at Tapu Creek: *Thames Electoral Roll, 1890*, p. 17.

⁴¹ This expression has not been traced in any dictionary of slang.

with an accident'.⁴² Because he treated the injured, everyone called him 'the Doctor'.⁴³

Pond retained a house at Tapu during the first half of the 1870s.⁴⁴ The following year, his application to be on the Thames electoral roll as a householder was challenged because he had left the district.⁴⁵

CHEMIST

During January 1866, Pond spent most of his time 'preparing to take the business', meaning join with Carl F. Fischer, M.D., a prominent homeopathic doctor,⁴⁶ in a pharmacy at 48 Queen Street, which he did at the end of that month.⁴⁷ In August 1872, he advertised himself as a homeopathic chemist, of 63 Queen Street, Auckland, 'and Brixton Hill, London'; he had an agent in Thames.⁴⁸ In 1881 the *Observer* called him 'the popular chemist'.⁴⁹ In 1883, he was elected to the Pharmacy Board with the equal third highest vote.⁵⁰ Three years later, he went to the Pharmaceutical Conference of Australia in Melbourne as a delegate of the board.⁵¹ In 1889, he gained third place, with 113 votes; the two highest polling candidates received 119 and 114.⁵² Three years later, he topped the poll, by one vote.⁵³

An obituary described Pond as 'one of the best-known members of his profession'.⁵⁴ Elected a member of the Chemical Society, London, in 1890, by 1893 he was a fellow of both the Chemical Society and the Society of

⁴² Hawkes, *Thames Advertiser*, 9 June 1891, p. 1.

⁴³ Hawkes, *Thames Advertiser*, 9 June 1891, p. 4.

⁴⁴ Thames Electoral Roll, August 1873-September 1874, no pagination, Auckland Provincial Government Papers, ACFM 8183, 3015/73, ANZ-A.

⁴⁵ *Coromandel Mail*, 21 May 1874, Supplement, p. 4.

⁴⁶ See *New Zealand Herald*, 2 April 1868, p. 8, 15 August 1893, p. 4; *Auckland Star*, 6 August 1878, p. 2, 19 August 1893, p. 4; *Observer*, 26 August 1893, p. 5.

⁴⁷ Pond, 'Voyage', p. 57; *Auckland Commercial and Professional Directory for 1866-67* (Auckland, 1866), pp. 16, 38, 44.

⁴⁸ Advertisement, *Thames Advertiser*, 22 August 1872, p. 1.

⁴⁹ *Observer*, 24 December 1881, p. 238.

⁵⁰ *New Zealand Gazette*, 4 October 1883, p. 1438.

⁵¹ *Auckland Weekly News*, 16 October 1886, p. 10.

⁵² *New Zealand Gazette*, 12 September 1889, p. 964.

⁵³ *New Zealand Gazette*, 18 November 1892, p. 1560.

⁵⁴ *New Zealand Herald*, 9 June 1941, p. 9.

Public Analysts, of London.⁵⁵ A member of the Society of Chemical Industry, in 1930 he was a foundation member of the New Zealand Institute of Chemistry.⁵⁶

PUBLIC ANALYST

In February 1881, he analyzed sugar beet grown in Waikato, and in April 1882 was working as the analyst for the Waikato Farmers' Co-operative Association.⁵⁷ Five months later, his evidence at an Auckland inquest disproved the belief that a girl had been poisoned. His tests, which he described in enormous detail and which involved dissecting some of her organs, took 'about a week day and night'. The coroner noted that Pond had 'the only place in Auckland fitted up with the necessary appliances, and he the only man who can do these analyses completely'.⁵⁸ The following month, it was announced that Pond, 'the well known analytical chemist', had accepted the post of the government's analytical chemist for the Auckland province under the Adulteration Prevention Act.⁵⁹ In December, he was appointed analyst of tea as well.⁶⁰ He remained a government analyst until 1911.⁶¹

In 1884, it was reported that he had

been making arrangements to have the analytical work carried on in premises apart from the Pharmacy in Queen-street. Residing in Hobson-street, he was desirous of obtaining premises convenient to his residence, and also to his place of business. After a careful search for such a place he failed to find one to his mind, and a short time ago purchased the block of ground at the corner of Durham and Hobson-streets. On part of this site he had erected a concrete building for the purposes of a laboratory.... The building ... consists of four rooms, each 12 feet square. There are two storeys, and as the building is clear of all adjoining premises,

⁵⁵ Davis, 'Pond', p. 393; Supreme Court, Judges' Notebooks, Conolly J, Criminal Notebook 1892-1893, p. 194, BBAE A304/121, ANZ-A.

⁵⁶ Davis, 'Pond', p. 393.

⁵⁷ *Waikato Times*, 19 February 1881, p. 2, 18 April 1882, p. 3.

⁵⁸ *Auckland Weekly News*, 16 September 1882, p. 15.

⁵⁹ *Auckland Weekly News*, 7 October 1882, p. 18, 21 October 1882, p. 17; *New Zealand Gazette*, 19 October 1882, p. 1499.

⁶⁰ *New Zealand Gazette*, 7 December 1882, p. 1834.

⁶¹ *New Zealand Gazette*, 19 October 1893, p. 1486; *New Zealand Herald*, 9 June 1941, p. 9.

the light in the several rooms is admirable. The entrance is from Durham-street, The outer door opens into the library and office, where a select collection of reference books is at hand. Behind this room is the assay room, supplied with furnace, retorts, etc. From this room is a stairway leading up to the floor above, on which are located the weighing-room and the laboratory. Each room, it will be seen, is thus devoted to one class of work, where all the appliances and apparatus requisite for the performance of this work are kept. This not only facilitates the work in hand, but prevents that confusion and crowding which can scarcely be avoided when all operations are carried on in a single apartment. The division of the work into sections will also enable several workers to be employed, if such should be required. The rooms are not only comfortable, well-lighted, but all within them are conveniently arranged for the work which will have to be performed. The library and office is the least comfortable, as it opens direct to the south, and will probably be found cold enough in the winter season. Throughout, the place is well furnished with appliances for gas lighting, and as the lower rooms are eleven feet from floor to ceiling, and the upper ones ten feet clear, they are not only well lighted and commodious, but present an airiness not always found in a place of business.⁶²

He tested a variety of substances, as required, at the end of 1884, for instance, locally made candles.⁶³ The following year, he made the first analysis of the Te Aroha hot springs and in 1892 tested the ones at Orewa.⁶⁴ Being at Waihi at the time of the Tarawera eruption of 1886, with two others he immediately went to the devastated village of Te Wairoa and then attended the funeral of members of the Haszard family, his personal friends.⁶⁵ With two others, one being a member of the staff of the Thames School of Mines, he examined the southwestern craters, being the first to do so apart from the investigation by Stephenson Percy Smith, Assistant Surveyor-General, of Southern Crater on the previous day.⁶⁶ "They managed to clamber partly inside one crater and to cross the line between two of the others. They went as close as they could to Black Crater, staying just beyond range of the falling and rolling rocks that clattered down the hill

⁶² *Auckland Weekly News*, 1 March 1884, p. 18.

⁶³ *Auckland Weekly News*, 6 December 1884, p. 19.

⁶⁴ *Waikato Times*, 10 February 1885, p. 3; *Te Aroha News*, 7 February 1885, p. 2, 30 May 1885, p. 2; *Observer*, 7 May 1892, p. 1.

⁶⁵ R.F. Keam, *Tarawera: The volcanic eruption of 10 June 1886* (Auckland, 1988), p. 236.

⁶⁶ Keam, pp. 236-237.

after being projected high into the air by its eruptions'.⁶⁷ Pond chemically tested the mud produced by the explosion, and recommended areas suitable for sowing grass.⁶⁸

Nathaniel Wilson, a member of the family who formed Wilson's Portland Cement Company in 1907,⁶⁹ being 'extremely jealous of his trade secrets', in the late 1880s refused to seek advice from Pond about the quality of the limestone in his quarry despite Pond being a personal friend. When he finally asked his advice, Pond 'merely looked at the two stone samples and said of the soft one: "I hope you have not got any of this stone in your quarry" '. After describing its nature, he 'explained how to fortify the stone with shell' and 'also provided a "calcimeter" to measure the lime content of the stone and taught Nathaniel how to use it; he charged £25 for his assistance.⁷⁰

Pond tested the purity of the Onehunga water supply in 1894, five years later tested Western Springs, and in 1899 and 1900 analyzed Lake Takapuna.⁷¹ In 1895, the *Thames Advertiser* sourly noted that

that volatile Aucklander, the public analyst, was frisking about our streets yesterday. We suppose he has brought down that long delayed milk analysis.... Really if Mr Pond is too busy with private matters to give proper attention to his official duties why does he not give up the office to someone who will. There are many poor men of better qualifications to whom the billet would be a real godsend.⁷²

The following day, it admitted its comment was unjust, for Pond had discovered several milk vendors delivering impure milk.⁷³ In 1905, his analysis of Auckland's milk supply revealed it was of poor quality.⁷⁴ Two

⁶⁷ Keam, p. 237.

⁶⁸ *Te Aroha News*, 3 July 1886, p. 2; *Auckland Weekly News*, 3 July 1886, p. 15.

⁶⁹ R.H. Locker, *Jade River: A history of the Mahurangi* (Warkworth, 2001), p. 293.

⁷⁰ Locker, pp. 290-291.

⁷¹ *Observer*, 21 July 1894, p. 7, 3 June 1899, p. 3, cartoon, 17 June 1899, p. 12, cartoon, 7 April 1900, p. 5; J.A. Pond, 'On the Percentage of Chlorine in Lake Takapuna', *Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute*, vol. 32 (1899), pp. 241-242.

⁷² *Thames Advertiser*, 20 February 1895, p. 2.

⁷³ *Thames Advertiser*, 21 February 1895, p. 2.

⁷⁴ *Observer*, 22 April 1905, p. 7, cartoon, 29 April 1905, p. 17.

years later he tested whisky.⁷⁵ As well, his chemical tests were used in criminal trials.⁷⁶

SCIENTIST

In 1881, the experiments of the ‘dapper little chemist’, commonly referred to by the *Observer* as ‘little Pond’, attracted the attention of the ladies at an Auckland Institute conversazione.⁷⁷ This journal captioned its sketch of him in its Christmas Annual for 1901 a ‘clever little gentleman’.⁷⁸ An obituary described his ‘professional interests’ as including ‘petroleum, brewing, gold-mining and assaying, agricultural and botanical work’. His research ‘covered many fields, it was always well carried out, and he rendered great assistance to the farming community in the earlier days. He never lost his love for scientific work, and to the last was engaged in research’.⁷⁹ In 1996 he was described as ‘one of the foremost scientists in the colony’ and ‘a generalist in a style now largely lost; the length and breadth of his contributions made him a notable figure in early New Zealand science’.⁸⁰ When he died in 1941 he was believed to be the oldest member of the New Zealand Royal Society, formerly the New Zealand Institute. ‘He retained a keen interest in scientific study’, and even at the age of 95 ‘worked in experimental plots in his garden, and had an excellently-equipped private laboratory, a fine technical library, a room for microscopic work, and a well-lighted analytical department at his home’.⁸¹

Pond joined the Auckland Institute in 1873, remaining a member for 68 years and from 1882 was on its council for 37 years.⁸² At the 1885 annual meeting, the chairman proposed him as president for the following year:

⁷⁵ Cartoon, *Observer*, 13 July 1907, p. 17.

⁷⁶ For example, *Auckland Weekly News*, 16 July 1887, p. 18; cartoons, *Observer*, 1 April 1893, p. 13, 6 October 1906, p. 19; *Waihi Daily Telegraph*, 10 March 1906, p. 2.

⁷⁷ *Observer*, 18 June 1881, p. 442.

⁷⁸ Cartoon, *Observer*, Christmas Annual, 1901, p. 29.

⁷⁹ A.J. Parker, ‘James Alexander Pond’, *Journal of the Chemical Society* (July 1942), p. 476.

⁸⁰ Davis, ‘Pond’, p. 393.

⁸¹ *New Zealand Herald*, 9 June 1941, p. 9.

⁸² *Centennial History of the Auckland Institute and Museum*, ed. A.W.B. Powell (Auckland, 1967), p. 53; Davis, ‘Pond’, p. 393; *Auckland Weekly News*, 25 February 1882, p. 19.

Mr Pond had for a considerable time identified himself with the Institute, and taken an active part in its business, not only on the Council, but also at times when it was necessary to make special efforts for the raising of funds in the way of conversaziones or exhibitions of different kinds, he was always to the front, and devoted a large amount of time and trouble to make a success of these undertakings; but in addition to that, and above it all, he had taken a very active part in the solid work of the Institute, and contributed many papers of a valuable character – chemical analyses of substances – which not only had been read before the Institute, but found a place in the permanent transactions of the New Zealand Institute.

After his unanimous election, Pond thanked them for the ‘great honour’ and the ‘many pleasant remarks’; ‘What he had done he had done for the future advancement of the Institute’.⁸³ The following year, when elected a vice-president ‘in accordance with the rules of the Institute’, he received a vote of thanks for the ‘able manner’ in which he had run it.⁸⁴ In 1888 he represented the institute at a conference in Australia, reading a paper on tellurium in the Upper Thames mines.⁸⁵ At one meeting in 1891, in the absence of the secretary he filled this role.⁸⁶ His will left £100 to the Auckland War Memorial Museum to commemorate the memory of Thomas Frederick Cheeseman, a former secretary, curator, and director of both museum and institute,⁸⁷ ‘as a token of my respect and regard for the great work which he did’.⁸⁸ This endowment enabled the establishment of the Cheeseman-Pond Memorial Research Prize for pure scientific research.⁸⁹

He lectured to the institute and other educational bodies such as mutual improvement societies on a wide variety of topics,⁹⁰ several of his papers being published in newspapers and the New Zealand Institute’s

⁸³ *Auckland Weekly News*, 21 February 1885, p. 19.

⁸⁴ *Auckland Weekly News*, 27 February 1886, p. 19.

⁸⁵ *Auckland Weekly News*, 27 October 1888, p. 36.

⁸⁶ *Auckland Weekly News*, 29 August 1891, p. 19.

⁸⁷ See *Centennial History*, pp. 14, 68-69; Jeanne H. Goulding, ‘Thomas Frederick Cheeseman’, *The Dictionary of New Zealand Biography: vol. 3: 1901-1920* (Auckland, 1896), pp. 95-96.

⁸⁸ Probates, BBAE 1570, 517/41, ANZ-A.

⁸⁹ Davis, ‘Pond’, p. 393.

⁹⁰ For example, addresses to Mutual Improvement Societies in Auckland and Thames: *Auckland Weekly News*, 1 September 1883, p. 18, 22 September 1883, p. 18.

Transactions. For example, 'Notes on the Chemical Properties of some of the Strata from Mr Firth's Well at Mount Eden' was the first paper to be published by the New Zealand Institute, in 1874.⁹¹ Three years later, his advice on how to defend Auckland from naval attack, 'Notes on the Firing of Torpedoes by Electricity', was published.⁹² The following year, he reported on a salt spring near Hokianga.⁹³ In 1880, at a conversazione organized by the institute, he and James Massini Tunny spoke on 'Inductive Electricity, experiments with Geissler tubes, Electrical Aurora, &c'.⁹⁴ Tunny, a mineralogist and analytical chemist, and Pond's predecessor as provincial analyst, had analyzed samples of fire-clay from Miranda for Pond in 1875.⁹⁵ A lecture to the Young Men's Christian Association on spontaneous combustion was illustrated by 'a number of pleasing and instructive experiments'.⁹⁶

In 1886 he spoke on the Tarawera eruption, and published, with Percy Smith, their detailed 'observations'.⁹⁷ Pond had originally intended to give the paper himself, but decided that it 'would be much better if prepared jointly with Smith. The decision may have been triggered by' his 'discovery, with far-reaching implications', that the volcanic dust was 'very largely mixed with true scoria ash'. They discussed their paper over dinner at Smith's house before delivering it to a full lecture room two days later,

⁹¹ J.A. Pond, 'Notes on the Chemical Properties of some of the Strata from Mr Firth's Well at Mount Eden', *Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute*, vol. 7 (1874), pp. 405-407.

⁹² J.A. Pond, 'Notes on the Firing of Torpedoes by Electricity', *Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute*, vol. 10 (1877), pp. 164-170.

⁹³ J.A. Pond, 'Notes on a Salt Spring near Hokianga', *Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute*, vol. 11 (1878), pp. 512-514.

⁹⁴ Programme of Conversazione, 16, 18 September 1880, *Centennial History*, p. 16.

⁹⁵ *Daily Southern Cross*, 18 May 1875, p. 3, 17 August 1875, p. 2, advertisement, 24 September 1875, p. 1; *Auckland Weekly News*, 16 March 1878, p. 13, 22 June 1878, p. 18; *New Zealand Herald*, 27 September 1882, p. 4; J.A. Pond, 'Analysis of a few of the Fire-clays of the Province of Auckland', *Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute*, vol. 8 (1875), p. 349.

⁹⁶ *Observer*, 12 October 1889, p. 3.

⁹⁷ *Auckland Weekly News*, 17 July 1886, p. 25; J.A. Pond and S. Percy Smith, 'Observations on the Eruption of Mount Tarawera, Bay of Plenty, New Zealand, 10th June, 1886', *Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute*, vol. 19 (1886), pp. 342-371.

when Pond explained the cause of the eruption.⁹⁸ In 1900, he lectured on his examination, with another scientist, of Lake Rotomahana, and ‘On a Hot Spring in the Rotomahana Rift’, which he had tested.⁹⁹

Over the years he made practical suggestions for developing New Zealand’s economy. For instance, in 1875 he informed the institute about good local clay that he considered was suitable for pottery.¹⁰⁰ This address was his second to be published by the New Zealand Institute.¹⁰¹ He lectured on the same topic in 1883, describing his experiments; this paper was also published.¹⁰² The following year he lectured on the possibilities of making paper out of New Zealand fibres.¹⁰³ His presidential address to the Auckland Institute in 1885 urged ‘the cultivation of fibre-producing plants’, for which there was ‘a never failing market’.¹⁰⁴ In 1889, in another lecture on local fibres, he stated his desire to increase the flax trade.¹⁰⁵

In particular, he sought assist farmers, an interest that was not merely theoretical, for in the early twentieth century he purchased some farmland near Auckland, and at his death was running stock on 15 acres at Wiri.¹⁰⁶ His son did the farming,¹⁰⁷ no doubt with advice from Pond. Other land purchases were made either for his business or as investments.¹⁰⁸

⁹⁸ Keam, pp. 238, 239.

⁹⁹ *Auckland Weekly News*, 29 June 1900, p. 31, 23 November 1900, p. 39; see also letter from J.A. Pond, *Auckland Weekly News*, 20 February 1902, p. 35.

¹⁰⁰ *Auckland Weekly News*, 16 October 1875, p. 13.

¹⁰¹ J.A. Pond, ‘Analysis of a few of the Fire-clays of the Province of Auckland’, *Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute*, vol. 8 (1875), pp. 348-351.

¹⁰² *Auckland Weekly News*, 25 August 1883, p. 8; J.A. Pond, ‘On the Pottery Clays of the Auckland District’, *Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute*, vol. 16 (1883), pp. 443-446.

¹⁰³ *Observer*, 10 August 1889, p. 3.

¹⁰⁴ J.A. Pond, ‘Anniversary Address to the Auckland Institute’, 1 June 1885, *Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute*, vol. 18 (1885), p. 417.

¹⁰⁵ *Auckland Weekly News*, 10 August 1889, pp. 28-29.

¹⁰⁶ Bank of New Zealand, Auckland Branch, Manager’s Diary 1907-1911, entry for 25 April 1908, Bank of New Zealand Archives, Wellington; Probates, BBAE 1570, 517/41, ANZ-A.

¹⁰⁷ Probate of Bertha Pond, Probates, BBAE 1570, 217/35, ANZ-A.

¹⁰⁸ Nominal Primary Index, vol. 2, folio 69; Nominal Primary Index, vol. 3, folio 634, DOSLI, Auckland; *New Zealand Gazette*, 14 June 1888, p. 683; *Observer*, 26 December 1896, p. 24; Auckland Land Board, *King Country Chronicle*, 27 September 1919, p. 5.

During the 1880s, he spent much time encouraging the development of a sugar beet industry in the Waikato, which he was confident would be financially successful.¹⁰⁹ In 1881, when informing the institute of the results of his analyses of beets grown there, he said he 'had given a great deal of attention to this subject.... He believed that there was every reason to believe and to hope that the manufacture of beetroot sugar would be a most profitable industry'.¹¹⁰ His detailed analyses were published.¹¹¹ In 1885, after he had been analyzing sugar beet for 'several years', he provided details about how to grow them to the *Waikato Times*.¹¹² During that year he visited the district, having been 'commissioned by the Government to inspect the trial crops of beet grown' and 'to make a complete test of the roots, with a view to determining their commercial value'.¹¹³

In his presidential address to the Auckland Institute in 1885, he spoke at length on the need for fertiliser because farming depleted the soil.¹¹⁴ Two years later he lectured on 'Manures and their Chemical Value' and in the following year on agricultural chemistry.¹¹⁵ In December 1892, his lecture to the Farmers' Club in Cambridge on 'Lime as an Agricultural Resource' was 'undoubtedly one of the most instructive lectures that has ever been delivered in the Waikato'. He answered questions 'in a ready and most explicit manner', and declined to accept any money, not even for his railway fare.¹¹⁶ In March 1894 he lectured to the same club on suitable manure for grass and turnips, and at Ohaupo on milk testing.¹¹⁷ Two months later, he addressed the Auckland Agricultural Association on 'Manures and their Relative Money Values'.¹¹⁸ Four years later, he lectured to the Waikato Farmers' Club on different manures and how to make them.¹¹⁹ His interest

¹⁰⁹ Pond, Anniversary Address, pp. 417-418; editorial, *Waikato Times*, 13 December 1884, p. 2;

¹¹⁰ *Auckland Weekly News*, 10 September 1881, pp 16, 21.

¹¹¹ J.A. Pond, 'On the Sugar Values of Beet-roots grown in the Waikato District', *Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute*, vol. 14 (1881), pp. 365-372.

¹¹² *Waikato Times*, 17 March 1885, p. 3, 14 July 1885, p. 2.

¹¹³ *Waikato Times*, 7 May 1885, p. 2.

¹¹⁴ Pond, Anniversary Address, pp. 416-417.

¹¹⁵ *Auckland Weekly News*, 13 August 1887, p. 17, 24 November 1888, p. 17.

¹¹⁶ *Waikato Times*, 3 December 1892, p. 2, 8 December 1892, p. 2.

¹¹⁷ *Waikato Times*, 15 March 1894, p. 4, 27 March 1894, p. 2, 3 April 1894, p. 2.

¹¹⁸ *Auckland Weekly News*, 23 June 1894, pp. 34-35.

¹¹⁹ *Waikato Argus*, 1 September 1898, p. 4.

in manure led to his being granted a patent in 1903 for 'an improved method of sterilizing bones, bone dust, flesh and blood manures, or other material'.¹²⁰ In 1927 he patented a new process for making super-phosphate.¹²¹

In 1888 he lectured on 'The Chemistry of Agriculture'.¹²² In 1899, with James Scott Maclaurin, later colonial analyst in Wellington,¹²³ who had worked in his laboratory in the early 1880s, 'first as an assistant and later as a partner',¹²⁴ he published a paper on 'The Composition of the Soil of the Taupo Plains, and its Suitability for the Growth of Grasses'.¹²⁵ In 1904, he provided the Auckland Provincial Conference of the Farmers' Union with various possible ways to prevent rust in grain but warned that no fully successful solution had been found.¹²⁶ Giving evidence on behalf of the Ohinemuri River Silting Committee to the royal commission investigating this problem he recommended depositing the slimes resulting from gold treatment onto poor quality plains near Waihi. He 'was satisfied from experiments he had made that certain grasses, legumes, and trees such as pines would grow in silt, provided the depth was not too great'.¹²⁷ At the end of his life he 'was very interested in experiments to discover a method for exterminating ragwort'.¹²⁸

In 1881, he reported on his analyses of limes grown in Auckland and Tahiti.¹²⁹ In 1897, a Paeroa newspaper referred to 'Pond's seedling plum' being grown in that district: 'as an eating plum, they cannot be

¹²⁰ *New Zealand Gazette*, 5 February 1903, p. 396, 12 November 1903, p. 2420.

¹²¹ Davis, 'Pond', p. 393.

¹²² *Te Aroha News*, 18 August 1888, p. 6.

¹²³ See Brian R. Davis, 'James Scott Maclaurin', *The Dictionary of New Zealand Biography: vol. 3: 1901-1920* (Auckland, 1996), pp. 308-309.

¹²⁴ Davis, 'Maclaurin', p. 308; Davis, 'Pond', p. 393.

¹²⁵ J.A. Pond and J.S. Maclaurin, 'The Composition of the Soil of the Taupo Plains, and its Suitability for the Growth of Grasses', *Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute*, vol. 32 (1899), pp. 227-241.

¹²⁶ *New Zealand Herald*, 25 April 1904, p. 7.

¹²⁷ *Auckland Weekly News*, 16 June 1910, p. 20.

¹²⁸ *New Zealand Herald*, 9 June 1941, p. 9.

¹²⁹ J.A. Pond, 'On the Percentage of Citric Acid obtained from Limes grown in Auckland and Tahiti', *Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute*, vol. 14 (1881), pp. 405-406.

surpassed'.¹³⁰ After retiring as public analyst 'he equipped a laboratory at his home for research, and his garden contained tung trees, a large-leafed variety of clover from Poland, and a special variety of thin-skinned white onion'. He was involved in trying to develop a tung oil industry.¹³¹

POND'S BUTTER BOX

His contribution to the agricultural sector that created the most interest was his improved butter box, for none of the butter containers used for export were entirely satisfactory.¹³² The first butter box patented in New Zealand, in October 1882, was devised in Marton.¹³³ In February 1885, with an Onehunga timber merchant Pond applied to patent an 'Enamel-lined Butter, Meat, and General Produce Package'.¹³⁴ Made of kahikatea, it was cube-shaped, enamelled with a methylated-spirit shellac on the inside, and held about 56lb.¹³⁵ A year later, Pond alone applied for a patent for 'Pond's Improved Process for enamelling Wood, etc, being an improved process of coating wood, paper, cloth, papier-mache, and other fibrous materials with a comparatively impervious enamel'.¹³⁶ Another year later he applied to patent 'a Hexagonal Keg designed to carry Edible Substances both Liquid and Solid without contact with the Wood, to be called "Pond's Hexagonal Keg" '.¹³⁷ In 1888 he applied to patent 'an invention for applying an impermeable material to surfaces for preservation purposes'.¹³⁸ According to one historian of the dairy industry, Harold George Philpott, his box 'had quite a vogue for several years, and may be regarded as New Zealand's first successful attempt to meet the demand. It set a standard for subsequent inventions'.¹³⁹

¹³⁰ *Ohinemuri Gazette*, 17 February 1897, p. 2.

¹³¹ Parker, p. 476.

¹³² H.G. Philpott, *A History of the New Zealand Dairy Industry 1840-1935* (Wellington, 1937), pp. 340-342.

¹³³ Philpott, p. 342.

¹³⁴ *New Zealand Gazette*, 5 February 1885, p. 202.

¹³⁵ Philpott, p. 342.

¹³⁶ *New Zealand Gazette*, 25 February 1886, p. 250.

¹³⁷ *New Zealand Gazette*, 26 May 1887, p. 692.

¹³⁸ *New Zealand Gazette*, 31 May 1888, p. 638.

¹³⁹ Philpott, p. 342.

The boxes were produced in his factory in Freeman's Bay, Auckland.¹⁴⁰ In 1885 a journalist who 'happened to call at the laboratory of my friend' noticed some 'cube boxes, each side of which would be little more than one foot square', designed to pack salt butter.

The old system of putting butter in casks is a very wasteful one, as when the casks are opened there is a good deal of waste which is fit only for cart-grease, the shape of the cask prevents it being packed without a great loss of space, and the empty vessel occupies as much room as a full one. After an immense amount of research, Mr Pond succeeded in discovering a composition with which to coat the wood, so that it shall have no corrosive effect on the butter. The cubiform shape of the new box will enable it to be better packed than a cask could be, as a press can be used, so as to get rid of any milk which might have been left in the butter, and there will be no loss of space in stowing on ship board, or on a railway truck. The sides, tops and bottoms of the boxes are not nailed together, but are kept in position by being fitted into grooves. The advantages of this system are that when a grocer wishes to open a fresh box, he has only to remove the top and sides, then he has a solid cube of butter, weighing 56lb, standing on the bottom of the box, and when that is sold he simply puts together the six pieces of wood on which the box was formed, and he can send them back to the farmer at a very small cost.¹⁴¹

They were produced by J.A. Pond and Company, a private firm consisting of Pond, his brother-in-law (Frank Herbert Combes), and his mother-in-law.¹⁴² Combes, an Auckland engineer who would leave an estate of £30,000 in 1936,¹⁴³ had been associated with Pond for years; in 1880 they both participated in an Auckland Institute conversazione, Combes speaking as a member of the Mechanical Department.¹⁴⁴ His mother-in-law had inherited nearly £2,500 from her husband in 1870, and through owning land and her shareholdings in companies and banks would leave an estate

¹⁴⁰ Davis, 'Pond', p. 393.

¹⁴¹ 'St Mungo', 'Echoes from the Café', *Waikato Times*, 15 September 1885, p. 3.

¹⁴² Bank of New Zealand, Auckland Branch, Register of Securities 1887-1896, folio 169, Bank of New Zealand Archives, Wellington.

¹⁴³ See *City of Auckland Electoral Roll, 1893*, p. 48; Probates, BBAE 1570, 551/36, ANZ-A; *Auckland Star*, 30 July 1936, p. 23.

¹⁴⁴ Programme of Auckland Institute Conversazione, 16, 18 September 1880, *Centennial History*, p. 16.

of just over £22,291 in 1910.¹⁴⁵ Pond, Combes, and Edwin Alfred Plumley, an Auckland dentist,¹⁴⁶ jointly owned the firm's Auckland property.¹⁴⁷

Philpott stated that the use of Pond's patent 'appears to have died out about 1889. Probably the necessarily high cost of the box, about 4s, and the advent of parchment paper were the main causes'.¹⁴⁸ In fact, they remained popular at least until the late 1890s. In mid-1887, the company was receiving increasing orders from both New Zealand and Australia, and had just sent 500 to the Fresh Food and Ice Company of Sydney. An Auckland newspaper commented that it was 'satisfactory to see that at least one local industry is not suffering from the depression of the times. Recently some of these boxes were exhibited at an agricultural show' in Sydney 'and the exhibit was awarded a silver medal and certificate of merit'.¹⁴⁹ The New Zealand Court at the Melbourne Exhibition of 1888 included his company's 'exhibit of a NOVEL WAY OF PACKING BUTTER and other perishable produce for shipment to distant markets; a package which is being largely used by dairy farmers throughout the Australasian Colonies'.¹⁵⁰ His boxes 'attracted considerable attention', the supervisor of the 'Government dairy' taking half of Pond's exhibit for use in the exhibition and having 'a further quantity' sent to him.¹⁵¹ In 1889, 'about 14,800' boxes were purchased by a 'powerful syndicate' formed in New South Wales to establish a butter trade with Britain.¹⁵²

In November 1891, it was reported that Henry Reynolds, in promoting the butter industry in England,¹⁵³ had 'greatly extended the business' of Pond's company. Reynolds arranged for all his butter to be shipped in these boxes, 'he having found that no other packages can equal it'. They were

¹⁴⁵ Probates, BBAE 1569/8083; Testamentary Register 1911-1913, folio 43 no. 331, BBCB 4208/8, ANZ-A.

¹⁴⁶ See *Eden Electoral Roll, 1890*, p. 25; *New Zealand Herald*, 4 September 1901, p. 3; Probates, BBAE 1569/4044, ANZ-A.

¹⁴⁷ *New Zealand Gazette*, 14 June 1888, p. 683; Nominal Primary Index, vol. 2, folio 69, DOSLI, Auckland.

¹⁴⁸ Philpott, p. 342.

¹⁴⁹ *Auckland Weekly News*, 4 June 1887, p. 17.

¹⁵⁰ *Nelson Evening Mail*, 3 August 1888, p. 2.

¹⁵¹ *Auckland Weekly News*, 6 October 1888, p. 17.

¹⁵² *Te Aroha News*, 26 October 1889, p. 5.

¹⁵³ See *New Zealand Herald*, 24 November 1887, p. 6, 23 September 1925, p. 12; *British Australasian*, 7 November 1895, p. 1786; Philpott, pp. 51, 60-62.

‘greatly appreciated in Taranaki, to which a large number are being constantly sent, as well as Wellington’, and the demand for them in Australia was ‘taxing even their extensive plant’.¹⁵⁴ The company, described as ‘woodware and box manufacturers’, advertising its ‘export butter package’ in farming districts.¹⁵⁵

The New Zealand Jubilee and Exhibition Chronicle of 1890 included illustrations of Pond’s factory and its boxes, along with considerable detail about the firm:

There are few amongst the many industries which Auckland possesses which have achieved success so speedily and increased so rapidly as “The Patent Enamel-lined Butter-box and Dairy Utensil Manufactory of Messrs J.A. Pond and Co.” Started in a very modest way four years since, it has now grown to a very large concern, with every prospect of still more rapidly extending. The business which chiefly engages the attention of this firm is the utilisation of a patented process of “applying an impervious enamel to the surfaces of wood, paper, papier-mache, and other fibrous substances,” by which such material is enabled to carry butter, preserves, and other edible substances without affecting the same by any unpleasant flavour or objectionable appearance. This enamel was patented by Mr J.A. Pond, Colonial Analyst, of this district, at the very time when the possibility of shipping butter to Great Britain and the Australian colonies was in contemplation. So valuable was this process seen to be that it was secured by patents throughout the Australasian colonies, the United States, Great Britain, and several other parts of the world, while the increasing demand has from the first taxed this enterprising firm to the utmost to keep pace with it.

A visit to their factory invariable creates surprise at its extent, and the large amount of machinery utilised in the manufacture of the patented box. The form of this box ... is unique, and the manner in which the six pieces of wood of which it is constructed fit with such accuracy to form a self-locking case, is very ingenious. These boxes are made of varying sizes, to contain from 56lbs to 61lbs of butter.

At the factory, all the timber was delivered to the upper floor,

where it at once passes through the planers to the enamelling room, and from thence by a shoot to the cut-off machines, where it

¹⁵⁴ *Auckland Weekly News*, 7 November 1891, p. 18.

¹⁵⁵ *Observer*, 26 December 1896, p. 13; advertisement, *Ohinemuri Gazette*, 19 December 1891, p. 5.

is speedily reduced by the various machines to exact sizes, which admits of every piece being interchangeable. The grooves are made by a specially-constructed machine which works automatically and with great accuracy. As every piece of wood traverses the various machines until it is completed and ready for packing, the result is a continuous advance of timber from the rough boards to the beautifully finished article, every stage proceeding at the same time with the greatest regularity.

The factory was 'under the entire management' of Combes, who was responsible 'for several of their most valuable labour-saving machines'. Details were given of other labour saving and cost-reducing ideas. 'At present the factory is running overtime to keep pace with the demand, and as upwards of eight hundred boxes can be turned out finished and crated per day, it will be seen how extensive the business is'. The opinion of the Minister of Agriculture in Victoria was cited: 'This was an enamelled butter-box which occupied a minimum of space, while not allowing any juice from the wood to enter the butter'. The National Mortgage and Agency Company of London stated that the boxes were 'the best that could have been adopted, as these boxes go a great way towards selling a consignment, the buyers preferring them to kegs, both for appearance and for the facility with which they can be handled'. Another London firm reported that 'all the best butters received by us have been in Pond's boxes, and the trade here are now quite accustomed to them'. The New Zealand government wanted all the best butter to be exported in them, the Victorian government 'unreservedly' acknowledged Pond as the inventor and appreciated their 'commercial value', and a just-published book on making butter by the director of an experimental farm in Victoria praised the patent for solving all the problems of packing butter in wood. 'One of the largest users of the boxes so far have been the Fresh Food and Ice Company, of Sydney, an exceedingly strong company, whose name is a guarantee of the excellence of all the provisions they supply'; it had used Pond's boxes for three years, 'and their butter takes premium place in the Home market'. As Pond was supplying 2,000 boxes a month to this firm, enough to pack 50 tons of butter, and a 'very large number' were being sent each week to Dunedin, Wellington, and Taranaki, 50,000 feet of timber were being used each week.

The firm also made joinery of all kinds: doors, sashes, mouldings, kegs and barrels, churns and butter workers, 'and every class of woodware required in dairy plants'.

Cheese crates are also turned out in considerable quantities, while all the wastes from the factory are converted into fruit cases, no waste being allowed in any direction.

The box business of this city is also largely in their hands, their specially designed machinery enabling them to turn out cases from the large kauri gum box to the tiny jujube packet. As this firm own bushes of both kauri and kahikatea timber, and are at present engaged in erecting a separate mill for breaking down their logs and preparing their timber, it will be seen how thoroughly they are imbued with that restless energy which in our colonial work is so pre-eminent.

His patent was 'remarkable as being the offspring of that necessity which is said to be the mother of all inventions', in this case the need for a suitable package. No invention could 'claim a greater amount of success, either from a pecuniary or utilitarian point of view, than this neat butter package, whose greatest perfection is its extreme simplicity'.¹⁵⁶ This pecuniary success was reflected in Pond's financial situation: when buying land in 1908, he informed his bank manager that he was 'making £1000 a year'.¹⁵⁷

As all these boxes required a large amount of timber, in 1894 the company owned several blocks of kahikatea forest, estimated to contain about three million feet of timber.¹⁵⁸ Presumably the 174-acre timber lease that Pond acquired in Ohinemuri in 1897 was to provide more kahikatea for his factory.¹⁵⁹ So successful was his patent that the Victorian government, after obtaining the details in 1888, 'actually made public the mode of application and arranged for an infringement in that colony, thus calling down a storm of indignation from almost every portion of the press'.¹⁶⁰ In 1889 the Victorian Minister of Agriculture told his parliament that he had failed to obtain the right to use the boxes. Because a duty would have to be paid if they were they imported he had instructed the government analyst 'to ascertain the component parts of the enamel' and use the knowledge to make boxes.¹⁶¹ The *Thames Star* headlined its report of his action 'Stop

¹⁵⁶ *The New Zealand Jubilee and Exhibition Chronicle* (Auckland, 1890), p. 19.

¹⁵⁷ Bank of New Zealand, Auckland Branch, Manager's Diary 1907-1911, p. 68.

¹⁵⁸ Bank of New Zealand, Auckland Branch, Register of Securities 1887-1896, folio 169, Bank of New Zealand Archives, Wellington.

¹⁵⁹ Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 45, p. 219.

¹⁶⁰ *The New Zealand Jubilee and Exhibition Chronicle* (Auckland, 1890), p. 19.

¹⁶¹ *Auckland Weekly News*, 26 October 1889, p. 19.

Thief!’ and cited the Melbourne *Argus* hoping that ‘a strong sense of justice will cause the Government to repudiate any action transgressing the patent rights of Mr Pond’ and wanting him to be paid compensation. The Christchurch *Telegraph* claimed that protection was ‘demoralising the public men of Victoria’ because, after failing to induce Pond ‘to place all the rights of his patent at their disposal’, the government had refused to purchase the boxes or remit the duty it had placed on them.

But something must be done! If advantage could not be honestly taken of the New Zealand invention, why, then, let it be done dishonestly. That was all. The government analyst of Victoria was instructed to analyse Mr Pond’s composition, and then, having found what it contained, use it in Victorian-made cast. That is what a Victorian Minister calls “surmounting a difficulty.”¹⁶²

Asked if he could explain this ‘extraordinary’ development, Pond told a reporter, in an article headlined ‘An Unfair Infringement’, that ‘he was as much surprised as anyone’. As for the Victorians being unable to obtain the use of his boxes, he explained that, not having received an application from the government he ‘could not have rejected any. Besides, is it likely that I should decline legitimate business if it were offered?’ His invention was fully protected in Victoria, ‘the renewal of the patent having been obtained only a few days ago’.

I learn that the component parts of the enamel have been ascertained by analysis, and that they were now starting to make enamelled packages in imitation of our own. I believe by the terms of the patent granted the Government reserved some right by which they can under certain circumstances work a patent themselves. But no honourable government would do such a thing without making liberal terms with the patentee, or at least entering into some sort of arrangement with him; whereas in this case I have had no intimation from the Victorian Government whatever of their intention.

The government would not import the boxes because it objected ‘to paying the duty they are subject to under the Victorian Customs tariff. I was willing to supply the boxes and to pay the duty on them provided the Government would allow a drawback of the duty paid when the boxes were

¹⁶² *Thames Star*, 29 October 1889, p. 3.

exported from Victoria filled with butter, but this suggestion they rejected'. He explained that 'we made some small two-pound boxes specially for the Melbourne Exhibition, where they were greatly admired' by the supervisor of dairies. 'I made him a present of the lot, about 150, and afterwards an attempt was actually made to make me pay duty on this present'. When the Agricultural Department had asked to be supplied with 'a lot' more,

I replied with regret that we could not, as they were only a fancy exhibit in that size, and we had not the timber cut of the requisite sizes for these small boxes. This is the only thing that can by any possibility be twisted into a difficulty about obtaining the butter boxes. The regular fifty-six pounds size they can procure at any time in due course by ordering them like other people.¹⁶³

He considered the Victorian government's action 'both unjust to himself as an investor, and unutterably mean in thus, in a way, depriving him of the fruits of his ingenuity'. It was not right 'that a Government, because it is strong should not commit an act for which he could get an injunction in the case of a private individual'.¹⁶⁴

The Victorian government denied infringing his patent, which applied to boxes, whereas the enamel used in Melbourne had been placed in casks. It claimed that the government chemist who analyzed Pond's enamel did not know it was patented, and that the results of this analysis having been published in the *Agricultural Bulletin* 'probably' resulted in coopers using it. An *Argus* editorial responded that this explanation did not remove the 'impression originally formed' that there had been government-authorized 'piracy' of material granted a patent in Victoria. 'The honour of the colony' required a full inquiry.¹⁶⁵ As boxes of a different pattern were used in Victoria from 1895 onwards,¹⁶⁶ it may be that Pond's version was not used from that date. Philpott noted that the 56lb boxes 'had a practically uninterrupted career until 1897, particularly in the North Island, when a movement in favour of a rectangular box was begun', for reasons of using less timber and having a package distinct from the Australian one.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶³ *Auckland Star*, 22 October 1889, p. 8.

¹⁶⁴ *Auckland Weekly News*, 26 October 1889, p. 19.

¹⁶⁵ *Auckland Weekly News*, 23 November 1889, p. 21.

¹⁶⁶ Philpott, p. 345.

¹⁶⁷ Philpott, pp. 343-344.

In December 1896, the Leyland and O'Brien Timber Company, formed in 1888,¹⁶⁸ and Pond's company proposed a merger of their properties and activities, with Pond becoming a director, Leyland and James O'Brien being the new managers. The new company would own Pond's freehold land at the foot of Wellesley Street, along with the large mill and plant and the patent rights to his butter boxes.¹⁶⁹ In reporting this 'really first class opportunity for safe and profitable investment', the *Observer* referred to Pond's 'very considerable and lucrative business'. As Leyland and O'Brien's company could not keep up with orders, 'no better investment has been offered to the public for years past'.¹⁷⁰ It asked: 'Where one could get a better investment for a few pounds just now'.¹⁷¹ The new company's formation was dependent on obtaining 32,240 contributing shares of £1 each by 1 February 1897, to produce a capital of £50,000 (the other shares being distributed amongst the principals).¹⁷² This flotation failed, as Pond's company was still selling butter boxes and kegs in March 1898, selling its factory to another timber company, Bagnall Bros,¹⁷³ in the following month.¹⁷⁴ Until this factory burnt down five years later, it 'supplied nearly the whole of the butter boxes used in the export trade' of the former Auckland provincial district.¹⁷⁵ Pond was not involved in the formation of this company in 1895, but by an agreement reached in September 1898 he, Combes, and Plumley received 2,900 fully paid-up shares plus £4,500 in cash in return for selling their company to it. Pond became a director in 1909, remaining one for decades, and was its chairman in the 1930s.¹⁷⁶

ACCLIMATISATION

¹⁶⁸ Advertisement, *New Zealand Herald*, 22 December 1888, p. 1; *Auckland Star*, 9 February 1889, p. 1; *Observer*, 8 February 1902, p. 4.

¹⁶⁹ *Auckland Star*, 22 December 1896, pp. 1, 2; *Observer*, 26 December 1896, p. 24.

¹⁷⁰ *Observer*, 26 December 1896, p. 13.

¹⁷¹ *Observer*, 26 December 1896, p. 10.

¹⁷² *Auckland Star*, 22 December 1896, p. 2; advertisement, *Observer*, 23 January 1897, p. 16.

¹⁷³ See *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*, vol. 2, p. 421.

¹⁷⁴ Advertisement, *Auckland Star*, 21 March 1898, p. 8; *New Zealand Herald*, 1 April 1898, p. 4, advertisement, 6 April 1898, p. 8.

¹⁷⁵ *New Zealand Herald*, 3 December 1902, p. 5.

¹⁷⁶ Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 101 no. 651, ANZ-A.

When describing his first experiences in New Zealand, Pond made it clear that he thoroughly approved of the method of clearing land for settlement:

Of all the pleasures of the bush, there are none to surpass “bush felling.” To hear the stroke of the axe falling as regular as the tick of the clock and the fun when two or three are using them! All at once you will hear someone shout out, all make for a tree to shelter them, then comes a creak, a rushing sound and a crashing sound glorious to hear and if a large tree it will bring down several others with it, especially if on a hill.¹⁷⁷

Pond took ‘a scientific interest in acclimatisation’, joining to the Auckland Acclimatisation Society in the 1870s and being a member of its council in 1878.¹⁷⁸ He encouraged the introduction of cash crops, for instance in 1874 giving the society a packet of seeds of a new variety of Virginia tobacco to pass on to anyone interested.¹⁷⁹

Despite supporting such introductions, which required the destruction of the original forest cover, he continued to delight in native flora and fauna. He spoke at the 1882 meeting that formed the Auckland Naturalists’ Field Club, was elected to its first committee, and re-elected the following year.¹⁸⁰ He gave the opening address in 1886 at an exhibition of stuffed native birds, praising the collector, who

had undergone great hardships and many dangers studying the fauna of New Zealand. He had often passed weeks alone without meeting with a human being, trying to obtain specimens of the wingless birds of the colony, which seemed destined to become extinct, and which were consequently becoming more rare and valuable, and the necessity for procuring good specimens of them became all the greater. The extinction of this species of fauna seemed inevitable, more especially now that the Government have introduced stoats and weasels into the colony, and this was the more to be deplored as the kakapo, the kiwi, and others of similar species, must become the prey of these pests, which, under any circumstances, must prove very undesirable colonists.

¹⁷⁷ Pond, ‘Voyage’, pp. 53-54.

¹⁷⁸ *Observer*, 25 November 1882, p. 169; *Auckland Weekly News*, 9 June 1877, p. 10, 30 March 1878, p. 7.

¹⁷⁹ *Auckland Weekly News*, 5 September 1874, p. 5.

¹⁸⁰ *Auckland Weekly News*, 18 November 1882, pp. 8, 9, 27 October 1883, p. 17.

Already some of the New Zealand birds were extinct, notably the moa and the native quail.¹⁸¹

Well aware of the dangers of introducing undesirable species, in the previous year he had devoted much of his presidential address to the Auckland Institute to the difficulties of controlling insect pests. His hope was that science would work out a solution based on studying their 'habits and enemies' and discovering plants that were 'the most capable of resisting their aggression'.¹⁸² He argued that colonists had 'been careless to a degree of culpability in not taking steps to guard against the importation of several of these pests' and were 'still lax' in 'not discovering or introducing means of eradication'.¹⁸³ In 1898, he recommended introducing toads and bats to combat insects.¹⁸⁴

OTHER EFFORTS TO ASSIST THE COLONY'S DEVELOPMENT

Pond was always alert for new ways to assist New Zealand's development. As an illustration of his desire for more English settlers, in 1874 he gave copies of two English newspapers, *Labour News* and the *Labourers' Union Chronicle*, which provided details of how to emigrate, to an Auckland one.¹⁸⁵ In the following decade, he was a member of the New Zealand Industrial Association, which encouraged establishing local industries.¹⁸⁶ In 1885, he informed the Auckland Institute of new sources of power that could be utilized by manufacturing industries.¹⁸⁷ In 1892, he was on the committee that organized the Auckland Exhibition.¹⁸⁸ In 1900, he not only examined the new Lake Rotomahana created by the Tarawera eruption but also sketched out a new tourist route to view it.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸¹ *Auckland Weekly News*, 27 February 1886, p. 28.

¹⁸² Pond, Anniversary Address, p. 418.

¹⁸³ Pond, Anniversary Address, p. 419.

¹⁸⁴ *Waikato Argus*, 1 February 1898, p. 2.

¹⁸⁵ *Auckland Weekly News*, 5 September 1874, p. 5.

¹⁸⁶ *Auckland Weekly News*, 11 December 1886, p. 20.

¹⁸⁷ Pond, Anniversary Address, p. 419.

¹⁸⁸ *Auckland Weekly News*, 13 August 1892, p. 27.

¹⁸⁹ *Auckland Weekly News*, 29 June 1900, p. 31; *New Zealand Herald*, 28 July 1900, Supplement, p. 1.

GEOLOGIST

In 1878, Pond was referred to as a skilled mineralogist, and ten years later as 'a recognized authority in matters relating to gold winning'.¹⁹⁰ In 1883, he wrote the section on how to find gold in the 'Hints for Prospectors' chapter of *Brett's Colonists' Guide and Cyclopaedia of Useful Knowledge*.¹⁹¹ He gave a paper on platinum in gold-bearing rocks was given to the Auckland Institute in 1882, based on his assaying of ore taken from the Queen of Beauty shaft at Thames.¹⁹² When this paper was reprinted in 1891 because of renewed interest in tracing this metal, Pond stated that, although he had not 'pursued his investigations on the subject further', he knew it was 'much more widely disseminated than was generally supposed, and he had found traces of it in Te Aroha ore. He has some mounted samples of platinum which occurred with gold on the West Coast'. There was no probability of payable quantities being found at Thames, 'although he felt sure it would be in some parts of the West Coast, from the amounts of it which were won in the old days of alluvial mining'.¹⁹³ In 1883, he lectured the Thames Mutual Improvement Association on 'the Formation of our Gold-bearing Lodes'.¹⁹⁴ Two years later, he gave a lecture to the Auckland Institute on minerals of the Coromandel peninsula. 'The paper, which was carefully written, and which proved very acceptable, commenced by referring to the deposits of gold' before explaining why silver was lost during treatment. Silver in the form of a telluride was first discovered in the Moa claim at Waiorongomai and later at Karangahake and Waihi. He 'had also obtained it in the Prince Imperial at the Thames, and he had no doubt that it took this form in some of the fine veins running through the Woodstock lode at Karangahake'. After mentioning copper, lead, and other base metal deposits he 'exhibited several specimens of the various minerals of the peninsula, which proved of considerable interest'.¹⁹⁵ His further researches on the occurrence of tellurium in the Upper Thames quartz lodes produced another paper on this topic three years later.

¹⁹⁰ *Auckland Weekly News*, 16 March 1878, p. 13; *Te Aroha News*, 1 September 1888, p. 2.

¹⁹¹ *Brett's Colonists' Guide and Cyclopaedia of Useful Knowledge*, ed. T.W. Leys (Auckland, 1883), pp. 720-721 [this advice is printed in full in the paper on prospectors' lives].

¹⁹² *Auckland Weekly News*, 28 October 1882, p. 8.

¹⁹³ *Auckland Weekly News*, 25 April 1891, p. 9.

¹⁹⁴ *Auckland Weekly News*, 22 September 1883, p. 18.

¹⁹⁵ *Auckland Weekly News*, 24 October 1885, p. 19.

He had discovered tellurium in rich stone from the Moa mine, also in stone from the Crown and Woodstock and other mines at Karangahake, and in the Champion and other mines at Te Aroha, and he felt convinced that its presence was more general than was usually supposed, and it was very inimical to saving gold or silver. He showed some specimens containing tellurium silver, and explained its nature.

Asked by Frederick Douglas Brown, Professor of Chemistry and Experimental Physics at Auckland University College,¹⁹⁶ whether he had made ‘any experiments as to the action of tellurium silver under certain conditions’, Pond explained that

he had not sufficient ore to make tests, but he found that in America the only way to deal with it was by smelting, and it required very rich ore to make it payable. He had been unable to obtain any amalgamation with quicksilver, as the tellurium being brittle broke up into such fine particles that it floated away on the surface of the water, and he had found no process for bringing it under the water. By high roasting they had got rid of a large portion of the tellurium.

He expected the proposed method for the Te Aroha Silver and Gold Mining Company’s plant would succeed.¹⁹⁷

Four of these geological papers were published by the New Zealand Institute. The first, brief, one, published in 1877, was about nickel in the Auckland district.¹⁹⁸ In 1882 another brief contribution was printed, on possible platinum at Thames.¹⁹⁹ Two were published in 1888, on local deposits of manganese and tellurium.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁶ See *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*, vol. 2, pp. 198-199.

¹⁹⁷ *Auckland Weekly News*, 27 October 1888, p. 36.

¹⁹⁸ J.A. Pond, ‘On the Presence of Nickel in the Auckland District’, *Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute*, vol. 10 (1877), pp. 454-456.

¹⁹⁹ J.A. Pond, ‘On the Occurrence of Platinum in Quartz Lodes at the Thames’, *Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute*, vol. 15 (1882), pp. 419-420.

²⁰⁰ J.A. Pond, ‘On the Manganese Deposits of the Auckland District’, *Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute*, vol. 21 (1888), pp. 355-358; J.A. Pond, ‘On the Occurrence of Tellurium in the Thames Lodes’, *Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute*, vol. 21 (1888), pp. 358-359.

In 1896 he was gazetted as an assayer of gold, and assayed ore from various goldfields into the early twentieth century.²⁰¹ He had a reputation of being 'exceedingly careful in his judgments, especially when gold is concerned'.²⁰² The first time he was recorded as assaying minerals was in 1873, when Coromandel miners sent him samples of what they believed to be platinum because he had 'acquired some celebrity as an analytic chemist'; he reported that it was not platinum.²⁰³ In 1883, when he examined alleged diamonds discovered near Raglan,²⁰⁴ he urged caution:

Without desiring in any way to check prospecting for diamonds and other gems in this district, I would urge upon those so engaged the necessity of further examination than the mere appearance of the stone, and the advisability of guarding against anything approaching to a rush until it has been proved that the diamond exists.

Noting that his investigation was hampered by only one stone being sent to him, he explained why they were 'pseudo diamonds'. He had

lately received some most beautifully formed crystals of this character, which were stated positively to be diamonds, and some also from the Lake [at Takapuna?], Waikato, Te Puke, the Kawau, Raglan, and the Thames, all of these having the same distinctive hexagonal character, and therefore requiring no further examination, as the diamond never takes this form.

Whilst it was 'probable' that diamonds would be found in the Auckland provincial district, the Waitakerei ranges or the Coromandel peninsula were more likely places to explore.²⁰⁵ When he and Cheeseman tested the diamond brought to the Auckland Museum by one of the prospectors, they admitted it was genuine, but Pond doubted 'whether the stone really came from where it is said to have been brought'.²⁰⁶

²⁰¹ *New Zealand Gazette*, 16 January 1896, p. 51; *Observer*, 26 October 1895, p. 9, 26 May 1905, p. 20.

²⁰² *Auckland Weekly News*, 17 March 1888, p. 15.

²⁰³ *Auckland Weekly News*, 15 February 1873, p. 9.

²⁰⁴ *Waikato Times*, 6 March 1883, p. 2.

²⁰⁵ Letter from J.A. Pond, *Auckland Weekly News*, 10 March 1883, p. 20.

²⁰⁶ *Auckland Weekly News*, 10 March 1883, p. 20; *Waikato Times*, 10 March 1883, p. 2.

In 1885 he analyzed gold found near Whangerei, and in the following year investigated a reported gold discovery in a creek draining into the Waitemata harbour.²⁰⁷ In 1888, after the Sydney promoters of a company formed to work the Broken Hill claim at Maratoto ‘materially altered’ his assay certificate in their prospectus, he informed the press that he had demanded an explanation from a promoter, who had admitted the alteration. Initially, he had been reluctant to make an assay ‘on account of the smallness of the sample, and its close resemblance to the Maratoto ore’, and only consented to test it when given more stone and the promoter ‘assured me earnestly that it was *not* from the Prospectors’ claim at Maratoto, but in “an entirely different part of the district”’.²⁰⁸ It had indeed come from another reef.²⁰⁹

Pond visited several mineral discoveries. In January 1881, the *Observer* reported ‘an excellent story’ about him at Te Aroha:

Mr Pond fossicked around for specimens, and one evening was engaged discussing the geological formation of the ground, when an unlearned but practical miner came to him and presented him with a piece of metal, fresh from the retort, for his examination. The *savant* held it up in the twilight, and after gravely adjusting his spectacles, examined it closely. He scraped it with his pocket-knife, placed it close to the candle, and afterwards put it in his mouth. After tasting and biting it, he held it up, with the air of a man “who knows, you know” said, “I should consider that this mineral is sulphide of lead.” “Sulphide of lead be d --- d!,” said the impolite exhibitor, “it’s retorted gold!”²¹⁰

The following year, when visiting manganese mines of the Russell district, he was accidentally shot in a toe by a pig-hunter, but the wound was not sufficiently serious to require hospital treatment.²¹¹ Late in 1882, the *Observer* noted that ‘little Pond’ wore ‘a perpetual smile. No wonder, he has struck a rich patch in Imperial and Queen of Beauty’ at Thames.

²⁰⁷ *Waikato Times*, 10 October 1885, p. 2; *Auckland Weekly News*, 15 May 1886, p. 11.

²⁰⁸ Thomas M. Humphreys, *Handbook of the Auckland Goldfields, New Zealand* (Auckland, 1888), p. 18; *Auckland Weekly News*, letter from J.A. Pond, 26 May 1888, p. 30, 2 June 1888, p. 36.

²⁰⁹ Humphreys, p. 18.

²¹⁰ *Observer*, 1 January 1881, p. 144.

²¹¹ *Auckland Weekly News*, 11 February 1882, p. 13; Auckland Hospital, Register of Admissions 1870-1885, ZAAP 15287/2a, ANZ-A.

Having discovered platinum in the latter mine, 'he is about, in the interests of science, to examine the lower workings of the Prince Imperial, to ascertain if there is any sulphur'.²¹² In 1885, he investigated the Tarariki Creek coal mine, near Paeroa.²¹³ In 1890, on behalf of the Onehunga Iron Works Company, he visited Hikurangi in Northland to investigate its iron ore deposits.²¹⁴

In 1892 the directors of the Cassel Company, which used the MacArthur-Forrest cyanide process, 'paid a high complement' to Pond after he 'reported at considerable length' about their process, its 'originality and scientific value', and how it could be used at Thames. 'So pleased were the directors' and their 'skilled advisers' in England with his 'scientific and comprehensive knowledge' that they asked their New Zealand agent to arrange for him to go to South Africa to give evidence in a pending law suit involving 'all the intricacies of the different methods of gold-saving by cyanide. This is a very great compliment to Mr Pond', as it revealed they believed he 'completely and thoroughly' understood the process 'in all its bearings and applications'. However, Pond's investigation into the cause of death of a possible murder victim made it impossible to go to South Africa.²¹⁵ At the starting of the Waihi Silvertown battery in 1896, Pond praised the cyanide process as 'beautifully complete within itself, and which he as a chemist could say was of great value in its present condition, but yet capable of great improvement'.²¹⁶ His reputation as a skilled experimenter with ores was referred to in England at the end of that year, when a leading mine manager 'spoke very highly' of him in this regard at a meeting of a London-based mining company.²¹⁷

In 1901, on the basis of his investigation he assured the directors of the Barrier Reefs Company, mining on Great Barrier Island, that their ore could be successfully treated.²¹⁸ However, in 1923 he told a prospector

²¹² *Observer*, 25 November 1882, p. 172.

²¹³ *Thames Advertiser*, 18 July 1885, p. 3.

²¹⁴ *Auckland Weekly News*, 14 June 1890, p. 6; *Te Aroha News*, 18 June 1890, p. 5.

²¹⁵ *Auckland Weekly News*, 26 November 1892, p. 35.

²¹⁶ *Auckland Weekly News*, 11 April 1896, p. 20.

²¹⁷ *Auckland Weekly News*, 6 February 1897, p. 31.

²¹⁸ *New Zealand Herald*, 28 September 1901, p. 3.

working on this island that the silver in his mine ‘could not be saved in New Zealand’.²¹⁹ His study of geology clearly continued long after his retirement.

MINING IN THE TE AROHA DISTRICT, 1880-1900

At the end of 1880, after collecting mineral and botanical specimens at Table Mountain, near Thames, Pond and some companions inspected the new finds at Te Aroha,²²⁰ but he did not acquire any interests. When he inspected the Lucky Hit at Waiorongomai in May 1883, he claimed to be impressed,²²¹ but again did not acquire an interest. His next recorded trip to Te Aroha was in 1886, after he had inspected mines at Ohinemuri; at the luncheon celebrating the arrival of the first train he proposed the toast to ‘Our Hosts’.²²²

He did not visit Waiorongomai again until July 1888, to consult with the Te Aroha Silver and Gold Mining Company about new mining and milling methods.²²³ Along with John Howell, an American expert imported to install a new battery process,²²⁴ he spent several days assaying ore with his ‘assaying apparatus’ and experimenting with ways to treat it.²²⁵ After returning to Auckland while Howell continued the tests, he returned in late August to undertake more experiments with Howell and Henry Hopper Adams,²²⁶ the battery manager.²²⁷ In late September, he spent several more days analyzing ore and discussing treatment methods.²²⁸ During an October lecture he ‘alluded to the strides which were being made’ by the company in their new battery, which he expected would save the tellurium in the concentrates.²²⁹ When he next inspected Waiorongomai mines in the

²¹⁹ John Wouldes to Minister of Mines, 30 July 1927, Inspector of Mines, BBDO A902, S171, ANZ-A.

²²⁰ *Observer*, 1 January 1881, p. 144.

²²¹ *Thames Advertiser*, 17 May 1883, p. 3.

²²² *Te Aroha News*, 6 March 1886, p. 7.

²²³ *Waikato Times*, 17 July 1888, p. 2.

²²⁴ See paper on the Te Aroha Silver and Gold Mining Company.

²²⁵ *Te Aroha News*, 4 July 1888, p. 2, 7 July 1888, p. 2.

²²⁶ *Te Aroha News*, 11 July 1888, p. 2, 1 September 1888, p. 2.

²²⁷ See paper on his life.

²²⁸ *Waikato Times*, 11 October 1888, p. 3.

²²⁹ *Auckland Weekly News*, 27 October 1888, p. 36.

following March he did not give an opinion on what he discovered.²³⁰ On his next visit in mid-1896 he was reportedly ‘astonished’ at the lodes exposed by the New Zealand Exploration Company, and for the first time explored the ground between Waiorongomai and the Waitawheta valley.²³¹ He did not acquire interests either in this area or in the Exploration Company.²³²

Being favourably impressed by some of his tests, Pond did acquire interests in the Tui district. In late September 1888, he analyzed five samples from the Montezuma, and a month later tested two more parcels from it.²³³ Other lodes in the Tui area were also tested at this time.²³⁴ In October he tested ore from the Lord Nelson, and must have been impressed with the result, as in the following April he was one of its owners.²³⁵ As another test, made one month later, proved it to be worthless,²³⁶ he cannot have retained this interest for long. In April 1889, as the mining inspector had visited the Lord Wolseley, another Tui claim owned by Pond, ‘on two occasions and could see no sign of any work being done’, it was forfeited.²³⁷

In February 1896 he was registered as the owner of the Day Dawn at Tui.²³⁸ Four months later, he was granted six months’ protection because it was ‘under offer on English market’. All he had done since acquiring it was to have some prospecting done.²³⁹ This attempt to sell almost untried ground failed. With others, in early 1897 he inspected mines in the Tui area,²⁴⁰ but did not acquire any. In January 1898, he paid the arrears of rent owing on the Day Dawn, £22, and agreed to the cancellation of his license.²⁴¹

²³⁰ *Te Aroha News*, 20 March 1889, p. 2.

²³¹ *Ohinemuri Gazette*, 20 June 1896, p. 4.

²³² See paper on this company.

²³³ *Te Aroha News*, 29 September 1888, p. 2, 24 October 1888, p. 2.

²³⁴ *Auckland Weekly News*, 27 October 1888, p. 36.

²³⁵ *Auckland Weekly News*, 27 October 1888, p. 37; *Waikato Times*, 6 April 1889, p. 2.

²³⁶ *Te Aroha News*, 29 May 1889, p. 2.

²³⁷ Te Aroha Warden’s Court, *Plaint Book 1880-1898*, 8/1889, BBAV 11547/1a, ANZ-A; Warden’s Court, *Te Aroha News*, 3 April 1889, p. 2.

²³⁸ *AJHR*, 1897, C-3, p. 98.

²³⁹ Te Aroha Warden’s Court, *Mining Applications 1896*, 119/1896, BBAV 11289/14a, ANZ-A.

²⁴⁰ *Thames Advertiser*, 1 March 1897, p. 2.

²⁴¹ Te Aroha Warden’s Court, *Plaint Book 1880-1898*, 13/1898, BBAV 11547/1a, ANZ-A.

Pond was responsible for bursting the bubble of the 'Waitoa find' of 1887.²⁴² When he first received some 'powdered ore or sand', the result of 22oz 7dwt 12gr of bullion was remarkable: 'I need hardly add that in the event of there being any large extent of this material it will prove a very valuable find', as the value of the sample was £71 15s 6d per ton. 'The gold is in fine water-worn grains, intermingled with magnetic and titanitic iron throughout the quartz and pumiceous drift. Care will be required in saving the gold, owing to the fine particles in which some of it is divided'.²⁴³ Later that year he made further tests on behalf of the Mines Department, and was 'engaged by a syndicate' to spend a week prospecting 'the lands around' and supplying 'a complete analysis'. His expectation that alluvial gold would be found between Waitoa and Pirongia was based on three years of testing samples containing 'distinct traces of gold' taken from various parts of the Waikato.²⁴⁴ Almost immediately afterwards, his further tests on Waitoa samples revealed that they had been salted with gold filings.²⁴⁵

INVESTMENTS IN OTHER MINES IN THE 1880s

Pond retained interests in the Thames district throughout the 1870s and 1880s, but had to be threatened with forfeiting his shares to make him pay calls.²⁴⁶ In late 1881, he inspected silver lodes at Waiomu on behalf of some capitalists.²⁴⁷ Also in 1881, he was elected a director of the Queen of Beauty Extended, later becoming its chairman of directors.²⁴⁸ He topped the poll when re-elected director of the Queen of Beauty in 1883.²⁴⁹ In late 1882 and early 1883 he became a shareholder in seven Thames companies and a

²⁴² See paper on this find.

²⁴³ J.A. Pond to Fraser Bros, 22 January 1887, printed in *Waikato Times*, 19 April 1887, p. 2.

²⁴⁴ *Waikato Times*, 11 October 1887, p. 2.

²⁴⁵ *Waikato Times*, 15 October 1887, p. 2; for the full story, see paper on this find.

²⁴⁶ *Thames Advertiser*, 12 November 1872, p. 2, 5 October 1877, p. 2, 10 August 1878, p. 2, 13 February 1879, p. 2.

²⁴⁷ *Thames Advertiser*, 4 October 1881, p. 3.

²⁴⁸ *Thames Advertiser*, 31 December 1881, p. 3; *Auckland Weekly News*, 4 March 1882, p. 19, 13 October 1883, p. 13.

²⁴⁹ *Auckland Weekly News*, 17 November 1883, p. 9.

director of one.²⁵⁰ During his directorship a 'rich patch' was struck in the Queen of Beauty.²⁵¹

Pond first invested in Waitekauri in 1881 and 1882, when he held shares in four companies; he was elected a director of two, the Caledonia and the Nelson.²⁵² In 1886, he inspected several Ohinemuri mines.²⁵³ Two years later, when a shareholder of the Woodstock, at Karangahake, he successfully moved that its mine and battery be sold.²⁵⁴

When Pond visited Waihi in March 1886, he was contemplating erecting a plant there 'quite as efficient and much cheaper than the La Monte process',²⁵⁵ then being seen as a possible solution for treating ore.²⁵⁶ Whilst there, along with John McCombie²⁵⁷ he pegged out the Silverton ground; they named it after the latest mining sensation in Australia, near Broken Hill.²⁵⁸ Pond held 3,080 of the 24,000 shares in the company of that name formed to work it.²⁵⁹ Elected a director, he worked on developing a new process to treat the tailings.²⁶⁰ In June that year, he superintended 'the reducing of the picked stone'.²⁶¹ The following month, an Ohinemuri correspondent reported that he was 'engaged in perfecting a process for the roasting, desulphurising, and panning of ores, by which it is expected that a larger percentage of gold will be saved than by the battery process. The plant will be chiefly used by the Silverton mine'.²⁶² By August 1887, as he had 'ascertained by making a series of assays while the battery was in

²⁵⁰ *New Zealand Gazette*, 21 September 1882, p. 1311, 19 October 1882, p. 1522, 14 December 1882, p. 1886, 21 December 1882, pp. 1915, 1916, 22 February 1883, p. 268, 31 May 1883, p. 722; Company Files, BBAE 10286/12b, ANZ-A.

²⁵¹ *Observer*, 25 November 1882, p. 172.

²⁵² *New Zealand Gazette*, 1 December 1881, p. 1601, 19 January 1882, pp. 90, 91, 20 July 1882, p. 988; *Coromandel Mail*, 19 November 1881, p. 4; Company Files, BBAE 10286/11b, ANZ-A.

²⁵³ *Te Aroha News*, 6 March 1886, p. 7.

²⁵⁴ *Auckland Weekly News*, 10 March 1888, p. 18.

²⁵⁵ *Thames Advertiser*, 16 March 1886, p. 2.

²⁵⁶ See paper on Peter Ferguson and his New Era.

²⁵⁷ See paper on Billy Nicholl.

²⁵⁸ *Observer*, 11 April 1896, p. 9; *Auckland Weekly News*, 11 April 1896, p. 20.

²⁵⁹ *New Zealand Gazette*, 28 January 1886, p. 141.

²⁶⁰ *Thames Advertiser*, 16 June 1886, p. 2, 27 December 1886, p. 2.

²⁶¹ *Waikato Times*, 19 June 1886, p. 3.

²⁶² Ohinemuri Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 3 July 1886, p. 3.

operation, that very little more than 25 per cent of the bullion value of the ore was being saved', he proposed that the tailings be re-processed.²⁶³ The following month, he successfully applied for the Silverton Extended and a water race.²⁶⁴ He chaired the company's annual meeting in December 1887 and was re-appointed a director, and one month later obtained protection for its property.²⁶⁵ The Silverton Extended was not transferred to the Silverton Company until October 1891.²⁶⁶

Pond also had shares in a company working on the West Coast of the South Island, and was a member of an Auckland syndicate seeking to find gold in Fiji.²⁶⁷

THE BOOM OF THE 1890s AND IMMEDIATELY AFTERWARDS

In 1893, he acquired shares in a West Coast company,²⁶⁸ but did not hold any in companies formed there during the boom two years later, when he acquired shares in four companies working in different parts of the Coromandel region.²⁶⁹ One of these, the Matarangi, purchased his Matarangi and Ocean View claims, plus a machine site, for £200 (he had bought the first of these claims for £20 and the site for £50).²⁷⁰

At Waitekauri, where he had applied for a claim in 1893,²⁷¹ he held shares in two companies.²⁷² At nearby Owharoa, where he assayed ore for

²⁶³ *Thames Advertiser*, 5 August 1887, p. 2.

²⁶⁴ Paeroa Warden's Court, Licensed to Work Special Claims 1887-1896, no. 3, ZAAP 13291/1a, ANZ-A; Warden's Court, *Thames Advertiser*, 9 September 1887, p. 2; *Te Aroha News*, 24 September 1887, p. 3.

²⁶⁵ *Te Aroha News*, 31 December 1887, p. 2; Warden's Court, *Thames Advertiser*, 13 January 1888, p. 2.

²⁶⁶ Paeroa Warden's Court, Register of Licensed Holdings 1887-1896, folio 22, ZAAP 13293/2a, ANZ-A.

²⁶⁷ *New Zealand Gazette*, 9 February 1882, p. 245; *Hauraki Tribune*, 23 September 1887, p. 3.

²⁶⁸ *New Zealand Gazette*, 23 February 1893, p. 271.

²⁶⁹ *New Zealand Gazette*, 9 May 1895, p. 792, 4 July 1895, p. 1075, 8 August 1895, p. 1239, 30 July 1896, p. 1243.

²⁷⁰ Coromandel Warden's Court, Register of Licensed Holdings 1889-1896, folios 85, 100, ZAAAN 14057/1a; Instruments 1893-1895, no. 58459, AAAE 15180/9a; Instruments 1896, nos. 66539, 66540, AAAE 15180/10a, ANZ-A.

²⁷¹ Warden's Court, *Thames Advertiser*. 25 January 1893, p. 3.

one company in 1895,²⁷³ he had shares in four companies and was a director of the Pandora, in which his wife held the same number of shares as him.²⁷⁴ He was a director of the Woodstock United in 1890,²⁷⁵ and six years later had shares in the Mangakara United Company, based vaguely in 'Upper Thames'.²⁷⁶

In 1877, after becoming a director of the Phoenix Company, of Tairua, Pond inspected its ground.²⁷⁷ Not till 1895 did he show interest in that area again, when he applied for the Te Karo, between Tairua and Boat Harbour, but quickly withdrew his application.²⁷⁸ He also applied for a claim at nearby Hahei, and further down the coast for one at Whangamata.²⁷⁹ In January 1897 he applied for a claim at Tairua but withdrew his application three months later,²⁸⁰ and his application for two water races there was struck out late that year.²⁸¹

In 1895, Pond was a shareholder of the Queen of Waihi Company, of which he was a director.²⁸² Later that year he was one of the original shareholders of two other Waihi companies and of another, the Ohinemuri, formed in the following year.²⁸³ In 1891, he was granted four months protection for his Silverton Extended, which was transferred to the

²⁷² *New Zealand Gazette*, 4 July 1895, p. 1073, 5 December 1895, p. 1883.

²⁷³ *Observer*, 26 October 1895, p. 9.

²⁷⁴ *New Zealand Gazette*, 24 October 1895, p. 1703, 31 October 1895, p. 1735, 5 December 1895, p. 1884, 23 July 1896, p. 1160; Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 110 no. 717, ANZ-A; *Mining Standard and Financial News*, 18 September 1896, p. 4.

²⁷⁵ Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 55 no. 371, ANZ-A.

²⁷⁶ *New Zealand Gazette*, 19 March 1896, p. 503.

²⁷⁷ Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 28 no. 161, ANZ-A; *Auckland Weekly News*, 14 July 1877, p. 8.

²⁷⁸ Thames Warden's Court, Register of Applications for Licensed Holdings and Special Claims 1887-1896, folio 160, BACL 14376/1a, ANZ-A; *Thames Advertiser*, 18 September 1895, p. 3.

²⁷⁹ *Thames Advertiser*, 18 June 1896, p. 3, 28 April 1897, p. 3.

²⁸⁰ Thames Warden's Court, Applications for Licensed Holdings and Special Claims 1896-1897, application dated 8 January 1897, BACL 14350/1a, ANZ-A.

²⁸¹ Warden's Court, *Thames Advertiser*, 17 November 1897, p. 3.

²⁸² *New Zealand Gazette*, 26 September 1895, p. 1545; Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 84 no. 558, ANZ-A.

²⁸³ *New Zealand Gazette*, 3 October 1895, p. 1575, 10 October 1895, p. 1603, 23 July 1896, p. 1161.

Silverton Company, of which he was still a director, later that year.²⁸⁴ In 1895, he was one of the three New Zealand attorneys of the Waihi Silverton Company, floated in Glasgow the previous year, and its managing director.²⁸⁵ As such, he opened its new battery in April 1896. Designed to use cyanide, its erection required the prior removal of the old battery. An Auckland newspaper complimented Pond on his ‘watchful interest’ in the new mill, as ‘evidenced by the periodical visits to the workings ... even during the worst parts of the winter season’.²⁸⁶ In his speech, Pond explained that, although the original shareholders of the 1885 company had been paid dividends after ‘rich ore’ was struck, the old processes extracted very little gold. To obtain sufficient capital to erect a new plant and to cope with ‘water trouble’ in the mine, the new company was formed in ‘a record flotation, inasmuch as the whole of the capital was subscribed six hours after the property had been placed on the market’. As well, ‘the shares were taken up on the strength of a statement made by the directors, in conjunction with a private letter from himself, which was accepted at home [England] without any verification’.²⁸⁷ He had assured potential investors of his confidence that the mine would ‘be a credit to us, and a great financial success when opened up’, and concluded by anticipating that the property would be ‘in the forefront of bullion producers – a marked success of the developments achieved by the utilisation of British capital in our New Zealand mines. (Loud applause.)’²⁸⁸ The *Observer*, which published sketches of the important mining men attending the opening,²⁸⁹ wondered whether there was ‘a prouder man than Director Pond at the opening of the Silverton battery? His head nearly touched the mill ceiling when the wheel turned’.²⁹⁰ The battery commenced large-scale production in the following

²⁸⁴ *Thames Advertiser*, 22 May 1891, p. 2; Thames Warden’s Court, Register of Licensed Holdings 1887-1891, folio 181, BACL 14355/1a, ANZ-A; *New Zealand Gazette*, 2 July 1891, p. 783.

²⁸⁵ *New Zealand Gazette*, 23 May 1895, p. 862; *Te Aroha News*, 25 May 1895, p. 2; *Observer*, 11 April 1896, p. 9; *Auckland Weekly News*, 11 April 1896, p. 20; J.B. McCrea, *Gold Mining at Waihi 1878-1952*, rev. ed. (Waihi, 1988), p. 98.

²⁸⁶ *Auckland Weekly News*, 11 April 1896, p. 20.

²⁸⁷ *Auckland Weekly News*, 11 April 1896, p. 20.

²⁸⁸ *Auckland Weekly News*, 11 April 1896, p. 21.

²⁸⁹ ‘Sketches of Mining Celebrities at the Opening of the Waihi-Silverton Battery’, *Observer*, 11 April 1896, p. 12.

²⁹⁰ *Observer*, 11 April 1896, p. 16.

year, and continued to do so for some years until the property was sold to another overseas company, the Union-Waihi, in 1901, whereupon mining ceased. During those years the Silverton had produced the fourth largest output of any Waihi mine.²⁹¹

In 1896, when Pond and John Russell Grey, an Auckland dentist associated with Thames mining,²⁹² obtained an option over three claims at the Wires, in the Maratoto Valley, for six months, they intended to spend at least £500 in prospecting, with the right of sale to a company.²⁹³ Pond intended to float them in England along with another claim he owned in this area.²⁹⁴ In late 1897, as the London directors of Melville's New Zealand Corporation were critical of the actions of the local directors, Pond and Grey, they sent an expert to inspect the properties.²⁹⁵ In 1899, Pond acquired his only shares at Maratoto itself, in the Maratoto Battery Company, of which he was a director; in the following year he held 5,334 of its 40,000 shares.²⁹⁶ In 1901, he was a member of a 'ticket' that fought rivals to become directors; being successful, he was re-elected at the end of the year.²⁹⁷

In the Thames district, in 1894 he was chairman of directors of the City of Dunedin Company, mining at Tararu.²⁹⁸ The following year, when granted a special claim there, he promised to spend £10,000 on underground work and 'anticipated £30,000' in capital being obtained 'within a very reasonable time. A large amount of capital could not be raised for a small area like a licensed holding'.²⁹⁹ This capital was not obtained, but he did obtain another special claim there in 1896, which he surrendered in October 1897.³⁰⁰ He experimented on ways to treat the Tararu Creek

²⁹¹ McAra, pp. 105, 109, 111, 114, 118-119, 122; J.F. Downey, *Gold-Mines of the Hauraki District, New Zealand* (Wellington, 1935), pp. 238, 288.

²⁹² See advertisement, *New Zealand Herald*, 13 January 1902, p. 8.

²⁹³ Thames Warden's Court, Instruments 1896, no. 67042, AAAE 15180/10a, ANZ-A.

²⁹⁴ *Auckland Star*, 26 August 1896, p. 5.

²⁹⁵ *Auckland Weekly News*, 8 January 1898, p. 28.

²⁹⁶ Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 151 no. 963, ANZ-A.

²⁹⁷ *Thames Star*, 1 February 1901, p. 4, 30 November 1901, p. 4.

²⁹⁸ *Thames Advertiser*, 11 January 1894, p. 3.

²⁹⁹ Warden's Court, *Thames Advertiser*, 24 May 1895, p. 3.

³⁰⁰ Thames Warden's Court', Register of Applications for Licensed Holdings and Special Claims 1887-1896, folio 136, BACL 14376/1a; Register of Licensed Holdings and Special Claims 1895-1896, folio 35, BACL 14355/3a, ANZ-A;

Company's ore.³⁰¹ He was also a director of the Clunes Company, in which both he and his wife invested.³⁰² In 1896, he was one of the three attorneys, meaning the local directors, for the English-owned Kuranui-Caledonian Company.³⁰³ The following year, he bought shares in a Puriri company, and at the end of the century was a director of the Bullion Company.³⁰⁴ He also invested in the Whau Company, and became a director of the New Whau; in 1900 he inspected the mine for his fellow-directors, and two years later became chairman of directors.³⁰⁵ His interest in the Thames district continued into the early twentieth century, and in 1901 he visited Tapu 'on some mining business'.³⁰⁶

In April 1896, Pond was elected to the Auckland Chamber of Mines, and in the following year was a member of its plans and statistical committee.³⁰⁷

Two odd comments in the *Observer* cannot be tested for veracity. In 1895, it implied insider trading in the Whau Company: 'Something on. Knowing crowd buying surreptitiously and largely. Good news from Home? Eh, Pond?'³⁰⁸ The following year, the same columnist reported a 'queer story' concerning the Norfolk Company appointing 'an incompetent to the battery, and in consequence unsatisfactory results. Is this how things are to be managed for Home capitalists, Pond?'³⁰⁹

INVESTING IN NON-GOLDMINING COMPANIES

³⁰¹ *Auckland Weekly News*, 6 February 1897, p. 31.

³⁰² *New Zealand Gazette*, 21 November 1895, p. 1883; Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 93 no. 606, ANZ-A.

³⁰³ *New Zealand Gazette*, 27 August 1896, p. 1383; *Auckland Weekly News*, 10 October 1896, p. 20.

³⁰⁴ *New Zealand Gazette*, 4 February 1897, p. 423; Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 153 no. 971, ANZ-A.

³⁰⁵ *Observer*, 24 August 1895, p. 16; *List of Companies Registered with the Auckland Chamber of Mines* (Auckland, 1896), p. 4; *Thames Star*, 22 June 1900, p. 2, 18 November 1902, p. 4.

³⁰⁶ *Thames Star*, 6 February 1901, p. 2.

³⁰⁷ *Thames Advertiser*, 18 April 1896, p. 3; *Auckland Weekly News*, 18 September 1897, p. 20.

³⁰⁸ 'Obadiah', 'Shares and Mining', *Observer*, 24 August 1895, p. 16.

³⁰⁹ 'Obadiah', 'Shares and Mining', *Observer*, 4 April 1896, p. 9.

In 1876, he visited Whale Island, off Whakatane, which led to its purchase by himself and Tunny so that their Auckland Chemical Works could extract what they estimated to be tens of thousands of tons of sulphur. Constructing expensive infrastructure in 1878 was required before mining could commence. After establishing a trade in 'flowers of sulphur and roll brimstone', they intended to manufacture sulphuric acid, 'the base of all the chemical manures which our farms will require', and, as Australia lacked sulphur deposits, they intended to export sulphur products there.³¹⁰ When the works to process the sulphur was opened at Shoal Bay, on Auckland's North Shore, many 'leading citizens and mercantile men' were present, and the man who presided at the luncheon revealed that Frank Herbert Combes was the third partner. 'The combination of the three partners, with their business, chemical, and engineering knowledge, would be found mutually valuable'. Pond, in responding to the toast, explained there was a large market for sulphur.

Though they had made this the formal opening, they had determined not to call them to witness what might prove a failure, and consequently had put through two charges, the result of which, about half-a-ton, was on the floor before them, while the coating upon the walls of the subliming chamber gives promise of a fair harvest for the trouble of reaping. But if their efforts were to stop here, the benefits of this undertaking would prove of but little value to the colony, and he hoped, if the present Government ratify the promises made by their predecessors (and they had already agreed to do so), to have the pleasure of again calling all present to witness the opening of extensive sulphuric acid and manure works on the same site, and this they hoped to do within a year from the present time.

Such a development would mean ending imports of expensive manures and 'give a greater impulse to the agricultural interests, which all would admit were amongst the greatest in importance in this colony'.³¹¹ His optimism was not justified, for a history of Whale Island noted that Sulphur Valley was 'mined intermittently between 1874 and 1894, but the quality was poor and there was not enough sulphur there for large scale mining. The amount mined probably never exceeded 100 tons'.³¹²

³¹⁰ *Auckland Weekly News*, 16 March 1878, pp. 13-14.

³¹¹ *Auckland Weekly News*, 22 June 1878, p. 18.

³¹² A. van der Wouden, *Whale Island: Moutohora: A short history* (Whakatane, 1994), p. 6.

In 1881, the *Observer* reported that Pond had ‘gone in for theology. He is trying to rescue soles’; the point of this attempt at humour was that he had formed a fishing company.³¹³ There is no information about the success of this venture. Two years later, he was a director of Potter’s Patent Wool Scouring Machine Company, which dissolved itself one year later.³¹⁴ In 1891, he was a member the Waitakaruru Hot Springs and Coal Field syndicate, which planned to develop these resources on the opposite side of the Firth of Thames from Thames.³¹⁵

COROMANDEL MINING IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

In 1919, Pond was a director of Hauraki Mines Ltd, which mined at Coromandel.³¹⁶ The following year, he became a director of the Mount Welcome; he received 800 fully paid up shares in addition to the 1,600 he purchased.³¹⁷ In 1923 he was a director of the newly formed Four in Hand, having an equal number of paid-up and purchased shares.³¹⁸ After regaling the mining inspector in January 1927 with a tale of woe about Waiorongomai, Pond mentioned that his only other venture with ‘any hope of success’ was the Mount Welcome. ‘I was sure there was gold here’, and in the previous August his syndicate, of which he was chairman, had cut several promising veins;³¹⁹ whether these were as promising as he hoped has not been traced.

THE WAITAWHETA COMPANIES, 1907-1917

From December 1907 to mid-1914, Pond was chairman of directors of the Waitawheta Gold Prospecting Company, formed to take over the prospecting licenses for 400 acres at the Waitawheta end of the

³¹³ *Observer*, 24 December 1881, pp. 230, 238.

³¹⁴ Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 42 no. 268, ANZ-A; *Auckland Weekly News*, 6 December 1884, p. 20.

³¹⁵ *Thames Advertiser*, 15 December 1891, p. 2; photograph, *Observer*, 9 May 1928, p. 18.

³¹⁶ Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 312 no. 1754, ANZ-A.

³¹⁷ Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 386 no. 2160, ANZ-A.

³¹⁸ Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 429 no. 2458, ANZ-A.

³¹⁹ J.A. Pond to Matthew Paul (Inspector of Mines), 17 January 1927, Inspector of Mines, BBDO A902, M6, ANZ-A.

Waiorongomai field, held since February 1907 by Joseph James Macky.³²⁰ Macky was the company's secretary and a director of its successor company until his sudden death in August 1915.³²¹ He was a prominent investor, legal manager, and director of mining companies in the nineteenth and early twentieth century.³²² His success in investing and in land and other financial dealings meant he left an estate of £11,332 18s 10d.³²³ Two of his sons also held shares in both Waitawheta companies.³²⁴ Macky was also secretary of a syndicate that owned the adjoining Great Western.³²⁵

Early in 1907, Macky displayed in his office a large piece of sulphide ore and some quartz samples rich in gold found between Karangahake and Te Aroha, an area 'as yet undeveloped, on which it is intended to carry out prospecting' in preparation for forming a company.³²⁶ As usual, the resultant company was under-capitalized, its initial capital being only £7,500, in 150,000 one-shilling shares, 20,000 of which were given to the promoters as fully paid-up. Originally, like his son, having 1,000 shares plus 250 fully paid-up ones, Pond gradually increased his holding until he

³²⁰ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1907, 1-4/07, BBAV 11289/19a; Rent Ledger 1893-1910, folios 214-217, BBAV 11570/7a; Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 222 no. 1314, ANZ-A.

³²¹ Death Certificate of Joseph James Macky, 30 August 1915, 1915/4552, BDM; Inquest on J.J. Macky, Justice Department, J 46, 1915/1043, ANZ-W.

³²² For example, J.J. Macky to Minister of Mines, 24 April 1911; J.J. Macky to Minister of Mines, 1 May 1912, Mines Department, MD 1, 14/1514, ANZ-W; *List of Companies Registered with the Auckland Chamber of Mines* (Auckland, 1896), folios 3, 4, 6; Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 158 no. 1008; box 211 no. 1255, ANZ-A; *New Zealand Gazette*, 11 September 1890, p. 995, 12 February 1891, p. 253, 13 August 1891, p. 938, 3 December 1891, p. 1368, 28 March 1895, p. 576, 5 September 1895, p. 1413, 3 October 1895, p. 1573, 12 December 1895, p. 1926; *Thames Star*, 23 March 1901, p. 2, letter from J.J. Macky, 9 August 1904, p. 1; *New Zealand Herald*, 31 August 1915, p. 9; Neil Lloyd Macky, *Macky Family in New Zealand 1845-1969* (Auckland, 1969), pp. 45-47..

³²³ Testamentary Register 1915-1916, folio 180, BBCB 4208/10, ANZ-A.

³²⁴ Lists of Shareholdings, Waitawheta Gold Prospecting Company, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 222 no. 1314; List of Shareholdings, Waitawheta Gold Prospecting Company, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 313 no. 1756, ANZ-A.

³²⁵ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1910, 88/1910, BBAV 11289/20a, ANZ-A.

³²⁶ *Auckland Weekly News*, 7 February 1907, p. 44.

held 4,500 in June 1914.³²⁷ When it transformed itself into the Waitawheta Gold Mining Company in 1914, he was a director, but retired during the following year. He and his son had the same number of shares in it until selling them in August 1917. This company had a nominal capital of £20,000, in 200,000 two-shilling shares; of these 145,000, paid-up to one shilling, were offered to shareholders of the first company, leaving only 55,000 in reserve to place on the market when more funds were required.³²⁸ Because of being under-capitalized, in August 1908 government assistance was sought for prospecting.³²⁹

The company did not have a good start. Six samples sent by Macky for testing early in 1908 produced values of from nil to £14 5s 5d per ton.³³⁰ Pond's report for the year to the end of December was blunt:

Your Directors regret that the Prospecting Work, which has been steadily carried on during the year, on the large Area taken up by the Company, has been altogether most disappointing. Nothing of a cheering character was discovered, and only a few drift stones proved to be of any value, while the reefs from which they were shed could not be located. The work itself was beset with difficulties of one kind and another. The land proved to be most inaccessible, on account of its altitude, its dense bush, its deep ravines, and its distance from supplies of every kind, making it necessary for the men to have their food etc, packed to them at considerable cost.

Honest and exhaustive prospecting work has been done by the men, and they are confident that there is nothing in the ground, or within the whole area to warrant the further expenditure of money in the large area taken up by the Company, to find payable gold.

The man who made the statement which led to the formation of the Company, that he had found rich Sulphide Stone well within the bounds of the area prospected, at a locality which he undertook to show to our men, utterly failed to show them any similar stone, nor indeed Sulphide Ore of any kind, notwithstanding that he was working there for Three Months at

³²⁷ Waitawheta Gold Prospecting Company, Lists of Shareholders, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 222 no. 1314, ANZ-A.

³²⁸ Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 313 no. 1756, ANZ-A.

³²⁹ Piako County Council, Minutes of Meeting of 17 August 1908, Matamata-Piako District Council Archives, Te Aroha.

³³⁰ Thames School of Mines, Assay Book 1907-1919, entries for 3 April 1908, School of Mines Archives, Thames.

the Company's expense, and ably assisted by energetic and excellent men.

Subsequent labours by our men in every creek and cranny signally failed to reveal anything of a distinctly cheering character.

Under these very regrettable circumstances your Directors cannot recommend the expenditure of any more money in endeavouring to find what evidently never existed there. Indeed our Prospectors have made it quite clear that the very nature of the country precludes the possibility of Sulphide Ore being found within the area taken up, unless it of course had first been taken there by human agency.

Whether it is desirable to take any action by the Shareholders to obtain some satisfaction in the general interests of mining, is another matter, and possibly deserves the earliest attention of your Directors.³³¹

The unnamed and untraced perpetrator of this deliberate fraud was not prosecuted, and no further work was done in the Waitawheta area.³³² This futile prospecting had cost the syndicate £461 11s 3d.³³³

In May 1909, Pond informed the warden that the company was employing John Tallentire to prospect the Westralia and Westralia Extended, acquired by the company in the previous month, adjoining Hardy's Mines on the upper, western side, and incorporating the old Vulcan ground.³³⁴ Tallentire, then aged 47, the son of an English farmer, had arrived in New Zealand in 1888.³³⁵ In 1896 he was prospecting near Ohui,

³³¹ Waitawheta Gold Prospecting Company, Directors' Report to 31 December 1908, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 222 no. 1314, ANZ-A.

³³² Waitawheta Gold Prospecting Company, Directors' Report to 31 December 1909, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 222 no. 1314, ANZ-A.

³³³ J.J. Macky to J.A. Pond, 15 December 1909, Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1909, 161/1909, BBAV 11289/19a, ANZ-A.

³³⁴ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1909, 27/1909, BBAV 11289/20a; Register of Mining Privileges 1901-1910, folio 9, BBAV 11500/1a, ANZ-A; Warden's Court, *Te Aroha News*, 25 May 1909, p. 2; *New Zealand Herald*, 26 May 1909, p. 5; G.E. Harris, 'Map of Te Aroha Mining Area (Based on an old map in the Warden's Office, Te Aroha) Showing Claims, Reefs, &c' (1912), appended to John Henderson, assisted by John Arthur Bartrum, *The Geology of the Aroha Subdivision, Hauraki, New Zealand: Geological Survey Bulletin No. 16 (New Series)* (Wellington, 1913).

³³⁵ Marriage Certificate of John Tallentire, 23 July 1900, 1900/3438; Death Certificate of John Tallentire, 17 April 1923, 1923/3984, BDM; Auckland Hospital, Register of

to the south of Tairua, and was later a shareholder in a company formed there.³³⁶ At the beginning of the next century he mined in the Tairua district, briefly.³³⁷ For most of the years 1900 to 1907 he was a labourer in Auckland.³³⁸ In July 1907, he told the Liberal and Labour Federation that he had worked for the city council as a labourer for six years, but that while in hospital he was 'approached with reference to an alleged offence perpetrated by another Council employee. Of this matter he disclaimed all knowledge, but after leaving hospital he was dismissed, having worked for only four more days, no reason being given. Although his application for reinstatement was supported by the Streets Committee, the engineer controversially refused to have him back'.³³⁹

Tallentire then moved to Waiorongomai, becoming a prominent member of this small community.³⁴⁰ A member of the school committee for several years, he was also an active member of the trotting club.³⁴¹ Like others, he illegally fenced vacant township sections to run cattle, and leased some sections for the same purpose, but had difficulty in paying rent.³⁴² In addition to assisting investors to obtain mines,³⁴³ he assisted the geological

Admissions and Discharges 1904-1908, folios 136, 142, no. 24677, YCAB 15288/4a, ANZ-A.

³³⁶ *New Zealand Herald*, 22 June 1896, p. 6; *New Zealand Gazette*, 29 November 1900, p. 2171.

³³⁷ Warden's Court, *Thames Star*, 4 December 1900, p. 3, 23 January 1901, p. 4.

³³⁸ Marriage Certificate of John Tallentire, 23 July 1900, 1900/3438, BDM; Auckland Hospital, Register of Admissions and Discharges 1904-1908, folios 136, 142, no. 24677, YCAB 15288/4a, ANZ-A.

³³⁹ *Observer*, 20 July 1907, p. 3.

³⁴⁰ For example, Eva Mitchell, 'Memories of Waiorongomai', *Ohinemuri Regional History Journal*, no. 17 (June 1973), p. 35.

³⁴¹ *Te Aroha News*, 27 April 1911, p. 2, 6 May 1914, p. 2, 7 May 1917, p. 2, 26 April 1918, p. 2, 1 May 1923, p. 4.

³⁴² Matthew Paul to Warden, 10 April 1915, Mines Department, MD 1, 6/61, ANZ-W; Thames High School Board of Governors, Minutes of Meetings of 6 July 1909, 12 July 1910, 2 November 1915, 4 July 1916, 15 May 1918, 17 July 1918, High School Archives, Thames

³⁴³ For example, Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1910, 17/1910, BBAV 11289/20a, ANZ-A.

survey in 1913.³⁴⁴ In 1919, after mining collapsed at Waiorongomai once more, he crushed metal for roads.³⁴⁵ When he died in 1923, he left less than £500.³⁴⁶ His death, at 56, was caused by pneumoconiosis, probably the consequence of mining, and stomach cancer.³⁴⁷

During 1908 and early 1909, Tallentire prospected the Waitawheta area in particular.³⁴⁸ After spending a year prospecting the Grand Result, bounded on one side by the Premier, 'and all round it', in February 1909 he was granted these 99 acres as the Westralia.³⁴⁹ One month later he was granted the Westralia Extended, the former New Munster.³⁵⁰ In early 1909, Pond went to Te Aroha to walk over the Westralia ground and take samples; having 'every hope of being able to do something with the ground', he planned to open up two reefs.³⁵¹ Although Pond kept a close eye on developments, Tallentire, who had advised the company to acquire the Westralia ground,³⁵² was regarded as the only active member of the syndicate. It was later believed that, although he prospected the Vulcan reef for the next couple of years, no ore was extracted.³⁵³ This belief was incorrect, as the directors' reports reveal; indeed, the only quartz crushed in 1910 came from the Westralia.³⁵⁴

³⁴⁴ P.G. Morgan (Director, Geological Survey) to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 30 March 1914, Commerce Department, AATJ 6090, 18/65, ANZ-W.

³⁴⁵ Piako County Council, Minutes of Meetings of 14 April 1919, 9 August 1919, Matamata-Piako District Council Archives, Te Aroha;

³⁴⁶ Hamilton Probates, BCDG 4420/1675, ANZ-A.

³⁴⁷ Death Certificate of John Tallentire, 17 April 1923, 1923/3984, BDM.

³⁴⁸ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1909, 26/1909, BBAV 11289/20a, ANZ-A.

³⁴⁹ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1909, 12/1909, BBAV 11289/20a, ANZ-A.

³⁵⁰ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1909, 13/1909, BBAV 11289/20a, ANZ-A.

³⁵¹ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1909, 27/1909, BBAV 11289/20a, ANZ-A.

³⁵² Waitawheta Gold Prospecting Company, Directors' Report to 30 June 1909, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 222 no. 1314, ANZ-A.

³⁵³ E.C. Macpherson, 'Report on the Te Aroha Mining District', 14 November 1932, Mines Department, MD 1, 23/1/20, Part 1, ANZ-A.

³⁵⁴ *AJHR*, 1911, C-3, p. 60.

In late May 1909, Tallentire received permission to work the Westralia with two men for three months and obtained six months' protection for the Westralia Extended. He had found two reefs, but more prospecting was required.³⁵⁵ The report of work done until the end of June, the first issued after Tallentire was employed, informed shareholders that prospects were now 'decidedly cheering'. Whereas six months previously 'it had almost been decided to abandon prospecting work altogether', Tallentire had discovered 'several splendid gold bearing reefs' which were 'being opened up to test their value, and when this work is finished, your Directors propose to promote a working Company'.³⁵⁶ Active prospecting of their nearly 200 acres uncovered 'several fine bodies of ore', all unpayable. From August onwards, work was concentrated on 'opening up and driving upon the No. 2 Lode' of the Vulcan reef, 'a splendid looking Reef from 4ft to 8ft in width. After 28ft of driving on the Reef, visible gold was obtained. The ore gives high assay values, and the "shot" has been proved gold-bearing for upwards of 25ft'. All the quartz extracted was paddocked, and a trial parcel of 50 tons would be sent to Thames for treatment once the tramway was repaired and connected with the mine. Although all this work was confined to the Westralia, Tallentire had found 'excellent gold-bearing surface stone' in the Westralia Extended and was searching for the reef which shed it. 'Our Property is splendidly situated for Mining, seeing that all work for many years to come can be carried on from Adit Levels and Water Free, and connection easily obtained at small cost with the County Tram Line'.³⁵⁷ By December, according to Macky £374 13s 10d had been spent on the two claims; according to Pond, when asking for approval to mine with two men rather than four, the amount spent was about £1,000. They were following a small leader in the Westralia, which they wanted to test before further developing it, and were prospecting the Westralia Extended 'when weather permits'. His application was granted, for six months.³⁵⁸ The local newspaper reported 'very encouraging prospects', and expected that many more than the three or four men currently working would soon be

³⁵⁵ Warden's Court, *Te Aroha News*, 27 May 1909, p. 2.

³⁵⁶ Waitawheta Gold Prospecting Company, Directors' Report to 30 June 1909, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 222 no. 1314, ANZ-A.

³⁵⁷ Waitawheta Gold Prospecting Company, Directors' Report to 31 December 1909, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 222 no. 1314, ANZ-A.

³⁵⁸ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1909, 161/1909, BBAV 11289/20a, ANZ-A.

employed.³⁵⁹ A week later, it cited the belief of a recent visitor to the mine that Tallentire was working 'one of the best pieces of ground in the district, the prospects of which are exceedingly encouraging'.³⁶⁰

In March 1910, an Auckland investor inspected the property with a view to floating a new company. In reporting this possible development, which came to nothing, the *Te Aroha News* added that 'of late some very kindly stone has been met with'.³⁶¹ In the first half of that year, the six miners managed to overcome 'the steep and rugged nature of the country and the wet weather' to send 15 tons to Thames for testing. This 'very difficult work' was rewarded with the 'altogether satisfactory' result of ore valued at £2 19s 5d per ton, taken from 'the full width of the Reef' and not from carefully selected samples.³⁶² The 15 tons had produced 15oz, worth £30 5s 11d.³⁶³ A rise to the surface revealed that values were 'fully sustained' for the 60 feet driven, with about 50 feet more to go. Other reefs were considered by Tallentire to be 'very promising, and well deserving of attention later on'. As a winze sunk on the reef had proved that the gold below was even richer than in the level, a low level close to the tramway would be driven below the 'Working Adit'. The directors were negotiating for 'an excellent Battery site'; if obtained, 'the Company will possess a property with all the natural requisites necessary to make it a profitable undertaking'.³⁶⁴

Protection for the Westralia Extended was renewed in September, and the number of miners required for the Westralia was reduced to five for the next six months, about the same as had been used over the past year. Two shifts were driving the low level; another shift could not be employed 'because the ventilation is not good enough'.³⁶⁵ As well as managing the

³⁵⁹ *Te Aroha News*, 4 December 1909, p. 2.

³⁶⁰ *Te Aroha News*, 9 December 1909, p. 2.

³⁶¹ *Te Aroha News*, 17 March 1910, p. 2.

³⁶² Waitawheta Gold Prospecting Company, Directors' Report to 30 June 1910, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 222 no. 1314, ANZ-A; *AJHR*, 1911, C-3, p. 60.

³⁶³ *AJHR*, 1911, C-3, p. 60.

³⁶⁴ Waitawheta Gold Prospecting Company, Directors' Report to 30 June 1910, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 222 no. 1314, ANZ-A.

³⁶⁵ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1910, 57/1910, BBAV 11289/20a, ANZ-A.

property, Tallentire was prospecting the adjoining Great Western ground,³⁶⁶ without finding anything payable. In December, results in the Westralia were reportedly ‘altogether satisfactory’, with the main adit, ‘from which the mine will be worked’, being ‘advanced a distance of 194 feet. The reef has been followed the whole distance’. This level would be connected with the low level one being driven, ‘thus uniting the whole of our operations, and giving an economical outlet for the quartz’ to be taken to the tramway. The company had acquired, ‘on favourable terms’, the properties of the Waiorongomai Syndicate, which included the Majestic and Bonanza claims, two ‘excellent’ battery sites, and ‘valuable’ water rights.³⁶⁷ This purchase, in November, also included a ‘New Mining Shanty with iron roof’ and various mining requisites.³⁶⁸ This acquisition meant the company now owned claims, notably the Loyalty and Palace, which had been extensively developed over the previous 30 years.³⁶⁹ In early 1911, Tallentire informed Matthew Paul, the mining inspector, that ‘satisfactory results’ had been obtained from the ‘considerable amount of prospecting on three levels’.³⁷⁰

In mid-1911, despite wet weather ‘considerably’ delaying sinking, rising and sinking was being done to connect the upper and lower working. Once a short tramline was constructed to the county tramway, the upper level would be stoped out. The company was negotiating to acquire ‘a suitable battery’.³⁷¹ Hardy’s Mines sold their battery and water race to the company ‘very cheaply’, according to John Samuel Hill,³⁷² the tramway manager.³⁷³ It was indeed cheap: ‘Purchase of Battery, Machinery,

³⁶⁶ Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Mining Applications 1910, 88/1910, BBAV 11289/20a, ANZ-A.

³⁶⁷ Waitawheta Gold Prospecting Company, Directors’ Report to 31 December 1910, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 222 no. 1314, ANZ-A.

³⁶⁸ Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Register of Licensed Holdings and Special Claims 1887-1909, folios 185, 187, BBAV 11500/8b; Mining Registrations 1910, no. 1586, BCDG 11288/3a, ANZ-A.

³⁶⁹ For map of this ground, see Harris, ‘Map of Te Aroha Mining Area’; for the Loyalty and Palace claims, see paper on Thomas Gavin.

³⁷⁰ Matthew Paul to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 31 March 1911, *AJHR*, 1911, C-3, p. 22.

³⁷¹ Waitawheta Gold Prospecting Company, Directors’ Report to 30 June 1911, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 222 no. 1314, ANZ-A.

³⁷² J.S. Hill to Minister of Mines, 10 June 1914, Mines Department, MD 1, 21/2/4, ANZ-W.

³⁷³ See paper on the Piako County tramway at Waiorongomai.

Buildings, and Plant' cost only £525.³⁷⁴ By the end of the year the low level and the rise to the upper level were completed, as was a short tramway to a newly constructed hopper beside the county tramway. The reef continued to be 'promising', and there had been 'very satisfactory results' from the 'considerable' amount of prospecting on the other claims. All was in readiness to convey ore to the battery 'economically', and the water race was being overhauled at minimal expense. 'The erection of Cyanide Vats will shortly be put in hand, so that the Battery may be complete, and fully equipped', to treat the free milling ore along with 'mineralized ores from a portion of our property nearer to the Battery'. Those shareholders who had 'availed themselves of their right to inspect the Property, have come away perfectly satisfied with what they have seen'.³⁷⁵

At the February 1912 meeting that received this report, when a shareholder asked whether one director had received a gift of 1,000 shares, Pond responded that he was the recipient. Another director explained that the board's unanimous decision had been made because Pond 'had spent a great deal of time and money, more than the actual value of the shares, in visiting the mine, and as they could not expect any man to do that he submitted that the gift, the only recompense they could make, was quite a proper one'. Pond then

reviewed the work he had done for the company. Believing that it was the desire of the directors that he should be recompensed, he consented to the gift of 1000 shares at 1s each, feeling that he had done a good deal. To put the matter legally right he would now transfer the shares and he would decline to have them back.

Another shareholder commented that Pond had taken the query 'in the wrong spirit. He felt that Mr Pond had done a great deal for the company' and that the issue had been raised solely to show that the directors had no power to make such a gift 'and it was time to teach them. No one had a single word to say against Mr Pond, for whom they had nothing but confidence and respect'. When it was moved that he receive this gift, Pond told the meeting that it took him 'three days on each occasion to visit the mine, but he gave his time freely to the shareholders. He desired them to

³⁷⁴ Waitawheta Gold Prospecting Company, Statements of Accounts for the Half-Year ending 31 December 1911, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 222 no. 1314, ANZ-A.

³⁷⁵ Waitawheta Gold Prospecting Company, Directors' Report to 31 December 1911, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 222 no. 1314, ANZ-A.

know, however, that his actual out-of-pocket expenses had been paid. While thanking them for their proposed gift he absolutely declined to receive the shares'. At the conclusion of the meeting, a vote of confidence was passed in Pond 'and thanks for his past services'.³⁷⁶

At the end of March, Tallentire informed Paul that the No. 1 level 'was driven on a reef of favourable appearance, and a rise put through to the surface, the stone showing gold freely'; the lode was 'between 6ft and 7ft wide, highly mineralized'. Once alterations to the battery were completed, it was anticipated that crushing would commence 'early in April'.³⁷⁷ In mid-June, the council was asked 'that something be done to ... the Tramway at its furthest end as the Company is about to commence crushing'.³⁷⁸ By the end of that month, all the preliminary work preparatory to stoping out the Vulcan reef was completed, and the council had repaired the tramway 'right up to our Hoppers. In the "Bonanza" section of our Mine, which is much nearer the Battery, men are engaged in opening up Three Reefs, all of which give promise of carrying payable values'. The water race had been repaired, 'and the 21-inch Water Pipes which convey the water from the Penstock to the Battery at high pressure, are being renewed at considerable expense'. The foundations for the cyanide vats were being excavated, all machinery was 'being carefully overhauled, and new parts supplied where required', and the completed battery would be 'a very efficient and up-to-date Reduction Plant'.³⁷⁹

Crushing commenced on the last day of August, but six days later was interrupted by a storm washing out part of the tramway.³⁸⁰ 'Through faults developing in the Machinery, and a necessary renewal of a portion of the Water Mains, it was not until the middle of September that operations were

³⁷⁶ *Auckland Weekly News*, 8 February 1912, p. 36.

³⁷⁷ Matthew Paul to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 31 March 1912, *AJHR*, 1912, C-2, p. 38.

³⁷⁸ Piako County Council, Minutes of Meeting of 18 June 1912, Matamata-Piako District Council Archives, Te Aroha.

³⁷⁹ Waitawheta Gold Prospecting Company, Directors' Report to 30 June 1912, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 222 no. 1314, ANZ-A.

³⁸⁰ J.S. Hill, Waiorongomai Tramway Work Book 1910-1912, entries for 30 August 1912, 5 September 1912, J.S. Hill Papers, MSC0116, Hamilton Public Library; for a slightly different number, see *Te Aroha News*, 25 May 1914, p. 2.

continuous'.³⁸¹ Eight miners were employed.³⁸² The first ore sent down proved to be low grade, about 300 tons producing gold with an 'approximate value of £230', but further treatment with cyanide was pending.³⁸³ The company later reported that these 300 tons had produced 105 ounces, worth £210.³⁸⁴ By the end of November, 159 truckloads had been taken down the tramway.³⁸⁵ In December a landslide damaging the Premier hopper created a shortage of ore for treatment.³⁸⁶ Official records indicated that, by then, 500 tons had been crushed, producing 224 ounces of bullion.³⁸⁷ The only recorded purchase by the local branch of the Bank of New Zealand, in February, was of 61oz 9dwt of high grade melted gold and 43oz 6dwt of low grade gold, a total return to the company of £214 7s.³⁸⁸ Tallentire was doing 'some prospecting with 2 and sometimes three men', and the Bonanza lode gave 'promise of a considerable tonnage of mineralized ore'.³⁸⁹

The warden considered that the syndicate was 'on the road to success'.³⁹⁰ But as the directors had to report, from 'causes unknown' the battery was burnt down on the evening of 7 January 1913. 'The total amount of Insurance was £2,250, but Two Buildings containing plant, escaped destruction, and the value of these, with the Salvage, was estimated at £400'. Their insurance company had paid the balance.³⁹¹ This

³⁸¹ Waitawheta Gold Prospecting Company, Directors' Report to 31 December 1912, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 222 no. 1314, ANZ-A.

³⁸² *AJHR*, 1913, C-2, pp. 21, 57.

³⁸³ Waitawheta Gold Prospecting Company, Directors' Report to 31 December 1912, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 222 no. 1314, ANZ-A.

³⁸⁴ *AJHR*, 1913, C-2, p. 57.

³⁸⁵ J.S. Hill, Waiorongomai Tramway Work Book 1910-1912, Report for November 1912, J.S. Hill Papers, MSC0116, Hamilton Public Library.

³⁸⁶ Waitawheta Gold Prospecting Company, Directors' Report to 31 December 1912, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 222 no. 1314, ANZ-A.

³⁸⁷ Downey, p. 260.

³⁸⁸ Bank of New Zealand, Te Aroha Branch, Gold Dealer's Book, entry for 19 February 1913, Bank of New Zealand Archives, Wellington.

³⁸⁹ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1913, 10/1913, BBAV 11289/22a, ANZ-A; Matthew Paul to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, n.d. [March 1913], *AJHR*, 1913, C-2, p. 21.

³⁹⁰ Warden to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 20 April 1914, *AJHR*, 1914, C-2, p. 56.

³⁹¹ Waitawheta Gold Prospecting Company, Directors' Report to 31 December 1912, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 222 no. 1314, ANZ-A.

estimate of the cost of the fire was much less than rumoured at Te Aroha, where a figure of £5,000 was mentioned. 'As the only means of quenching the fire was a bucket brigade', the plant could not be saved.³⁹² The company planned to continue working:

In the Mine the Vulcan lode has increased to a full width of Six feet, and extended a long way into the hill, the whole of the lode, so far as driven on at this point, being payable. The development of the Bonanza Lode also gives promise of a considerable tonnage of ore, which, though mineralized, has every appearance of yielding fair returns. Other lodes have been exploited to a small extent, and they fully deserve further work, as it is reasonably expected that some of these may also furnish good ore.

Much of the machinery had been salvaged, and a restored plant was to be erected for £1,636. If rebuilding commenced at once, renewed crushing was 'anticipated' to be 'about' four and a half months away.³⁹³ Shareholders approved rebuilding the battery, but 'unforeseen circumstances regarding the position of our Battery Site and Races' meant that 'much valuable time was lost', but by mid-1913 the structure was completed, two chains closer to the tramway, thereby enabling 'the quartz to be more economically treated'. All the necessary machinery had been obtained and was about to be erected; in the meantime, the mine had been 'kept in good order' in readiness to restart immediately the battery was ready.³⁹⁴ As the council declined to erect a new bridge to the battery failed, the company had to meet this cost.³⁹⁵ Although six men were employed,³⁹⁶ no mining was carried out because, as Tallentire explained, 'we have no place to put our ore if we take

³⁹² Ted Axford, 'The Burrator Weekly News', 11 January 1913, printed in *A Childhood in Te Aroha, 1907-1913* (Wellington, 1992), p. 78.

³⁹³ Waitawheta Gold Prospecting Company, Directors' Report to 31 December 1912, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 222 no. 1314, ANZ-A.

³⁹⁴ Waitawheta Gold Prospecting Company, Directors' Report to 30 June 1913, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 222 no. 1314, ANZ-A.

³⁹⁵ Piako County Council, Minutes of Meetings of 19 June 1913, 26 November 1913, 22 December 1913, Matamata-Piako District Council Archives, Te Aroha.

³⁹⁶ *AJHR*, 1914, C-2, p. 75.

it out of the mine'.³⁹⁷ By the end of the year, machinery acquired in Waitekauri had been re-erected, and, according to the directors, crushing had restarted, very much later than intended.³⁹⁸ But according to an Auckland newspaper, neither the battery nor the bridge linking it to the tramway had been completed by mid-February 1914, and although mining had restarted, crushing could not take place for a few weeks.³⁹⁹ The newspaper was correct, for on 18 February Tallentire asked the council to have the tramway ready for bringing down trucks from the 26th onwards.⁴⁰⁰ By a month or so later, 200 tons had produced 119 ounces, a return of £251 15s 11d.⁴⁰¹ Frederick Paltridge, formerly superintendent of the Bendigo Battery,⁴⁰² was the battery manager.⁴⁰³

This was the final crushing, because the £1,900 spent reconstructing the battery and improving the water race had exhausted the company's capital, which had never been sufficient to open up even the known lodes. 'Especially does this refer to the Waiorongomai section, where we have very nice ore, but no means of conveying it to the Battery', the directors reported in December 1913. As 'further work on the Vulcan Lode would also enable us to increase our output of quartz, and ensure regular supplies for the Battery', they recommended re-forming the company as the Waitawheta Gold Mining Company, with a capital of £25,000.⁴⁰⁴ The shareholders

³⁹⁷ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1913, 10/1913, BBAV 11289/22a, ANZ-A; Matthew Paul to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, n.d. [March 1914], *AJHR*, 1914, C-2, p. 37.

³⁹⁸ Waitawheta Gold Prospecting Company, Directors' Report to 31 December 1913, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 222 no. 1314, ANZ-A.

³⁹⁹ *Auckland Weekly News*, 19 February 1914, p. 56.

⁴⁰⁰ Piako County Council, Minutes of Meeting of 18 February 1914, Matamata-Piako District Council Archives, Te Aroha.

⁴⁰¹ *AJHR*, 1914, C-2, p. 75.

⁴⁰² See paper on this battery.

⁴⁰³ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1911, 1/1911, BBAV 11289/21a; Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 226 no. 1332, ANZ-A; A. & G. Price, Letterbook 1913-1914, p. 984, A. & G. Price Archives, Thames.

⁴⁰⁴ Waitawheta Gold Prospecting Company, Directors' Report to 31 December 1913, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 222 no. 1314, ANZ-A; Warden's Court, *Te Aroha News*, 12 May 1915, p. 2.

agreed, in May 1914, but limited its capital to £20,000.⁴⁰⁵ Its secretary until March 1917, and a shareholder until it was liquidated, was John Victor Macky, known as Dick, a son of Joseph James. Born in Auckland in 1887, he was an accountant and a prominent rugby player before enlisting in 1916.⁴⁰⁶ Having been chairman of directors of the preceding company, Pond was one of the original directors, but retired during the first year; both he and his son retained all their shares until it collapsed.⁴⁰⁷

In June 1914, the tramway manager told the minister that the company had sold its battery 'at the price of old Iron and Timber', leaving only the water race, pipes, and stone crusher left, all of which were on offer to the council, 'so they don't intend working mines'.⁴⁰⁸ Between March and May over 22 tons of scrap iron and brass and some 'yellow metal' was sold, for £154 13s 3d; it failed to sell old cams and scrap steel.⁴⁰⁹ This was mostly scrap from the destroyed battery, for the company retained its new machinery and plant until 1918,⁴¹⁰ genuinely wanting to continue mining, but the outbreak of war shortly after it was registered on 22 July had an immediate impact, as was reported in January 1915:

The Capital so much required by this Company, was not paid as promptly as desired. This necessitated the Board taking a conservative course of action, and the Mine which had been closed down during the re-construction was not re-opened. The services of our Manager alone were retained at a small Salary as working Caretaker of the Company's property, plant, Water Race, etc.

⁴⁰⁵ *Te Aroha News*, 25 May 1914, p. 2; *Auckland Weekly News*, 11 June 1914, p. 56; *New Zealand Gazette*, 25 June 1914, p. 2580.

⁴⁰⁶ H.C. Choyce to Assistant Registrar of Companies, 27 March 1917; Lists of Shareholders, Waitawheta Gold Mining Company, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 313 no. 1756, ANZ-A; N.L. Macky, *Macky Family in New Zealand 1845-1969* (Auckland, 1969), pp. 47-48.

⁴⁰⁷ Waitawheta Gold Mining Company, Directors' Report to 31 July 1915; List of Shareholders, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 313 no. 1756, ANZ-A.

⁴⁰⁸ J.S. Hill to Minister of Mines, 10 June 1914, Mines Department, MD 1, 21/2/4, ANZ-W.

⁴⁰⁹ A. & G. Price to Frederick Paltridge, 26 March 1914, A. & G. Price Letterbook 1913-1914, p. 984; A. & G. Price to Frederick Paltridge, 2 April 1914, 7 April 1914, 29 April 1914, 2 May 1914; entry for 19 May 1914, A. & G. Price Letterbook 1914-1915, pp. 10, 27, 87, 99, 137, A. & G. Price Archives, Thames.

⁴¹⁰ Waitawheta Gold Mining Company, Balance Sheets, 23 June 1915, 14 August 1916, 7 November 1917, 14 February 1918, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 313 no. 1756, ANZ-A.

The Liabilities taken over from the old Company and the heavy Rents payable have been a drag on our resources. Efforts were made to get a reduction in the Rents, but so far the Warden has not consented to any release in this direction.

It is not probable that operations will be commenced till the War is over, as your Directors do not consider it at all advisable to call up further Capital at the present time.⁴¹¹

During the war the claims remained under protection, and as work was not expected to restart until it ended Tallentire, the caretaker, kept the drives and the water race in good repair.⁴¹² The only employee, he also did some prospecting.⁴¹³ In December 1914, Joseph Macky sent samples to be tested to determine their suitability for treating with cyanide. 'Unfortunately, Reefs in the Waiorongomai Valley are as patchy as at the Thames, but a good patch would make up for years of continual discouragement. And so we are buoyed up with the hope that better luck is in store for us if we will only continue prospecting'.⁴¹⁴ Almost two years later, Tallentire was 'greatly encouraged by the samples of stone lately procured', and was negotiating with the council about cheaper use of the tramway, which would make the 'difference between success and failure'.⁴¹⁵ When he sent a few trucks down, the company struggled to meet the cost.⁴¹⁶

In April 1915 Joseph Macky told the Mines Department that the company had spent several thousand pounds during the past three years 'with most discouraging results, so discouraging that of the last Call, 48,000 shares were Forfeited out of a total of 145,000'. In addition, the warden would not reduce the rent. Because of the company's financial situation,

⁴¹¹ Waitawheta Gold Mining Company, Directors' Report to 31 January 1915, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 313 no. 1756, ANZ-A.

⁴¹² Waitawheta Gold Mining Company, Directors' Reports to 31 July 1915, 31 January 1916, 31 July 1916, 31 January 1917, 31 July 1917, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 313 no. 1756, ANZ-A.

⁴¹³ *AJHR*, 1915, C-2, p. 49; 1916, C-2, p. 45; 1917, C-2, p. 51; 1918, C-2, pp. 10, 31.

⁴¹⁴ J.J. Macky to Director, Thames School of Mines, 5 December 1914, Inwards Correspondence 1912-1916, School of Mines Archives, Thames.

⁴¹⁵ Waiorongomai Correspondent, *Te Aroha News*, 1 November 1916, p. 3.

⁴¹⁶ Piako County Council, Minutes of Meetings of 21 January 1918, 4 February 1918, Matamata-Piako District Council Archives, Te Aroha.

Macky had not charged for his services for the past six months.⁴¹⁷ One month later he told the warden that altogether the two companies had spent £9,400, but ‘very little gold had been got so far, not half enough to pay expenses’. Mining generally was the worst for 32 years: ‘nothing like it since 1879. Shares are being forfeited in all directions’ throughout the peninsula.⁴¹⁸ In passing on this information to the minister, the warden noted that the owners had ‘come to the end of their present resources’ and were unable to raise money ‘for experimental mining’. He had suspended labour regulations and the Piako County had reduced the rent charged; the Ohinemuri County had declined, fearing setting a precedent.⁴¹⁹

The shareholders became increasingly disheartened. A call of a halfpenny a share made in June 1916 would be sufficient to pay rent and meeting outstanding accounts, but there was ‘a very poor response, 55 shareholders only having paid’,⁴²⁰ including the Ponds. The directors admitted defeat, and in November 1917 unsuccessfully offered the council ‘the Machinery & water race connected with the Stone breaker’.⁴²¹ One month later, a new group of Auckland investors calling themselves the Waitawheta Syndicate bought all the properties and rights.⁴²² The leading investor, Percy Nichol Kingswell, was largely unsuccessful in his mining investments in both islands.⁴²³ As Pond was still interested in other mines

⁴¹⁷ J.J. Macky to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 26 April 1915, Mines Department, MD 1, 14/1514, ANZ-W.

⁴¹⁸ Evidence of J.J. Macky, May 1915, appended to Warden to Minister of Mines, 15 July 1915, Mines Department, MD 1, 23/4/54, ANZ-W; Warden’s Court, *Te Aroha News*, 12 May 1915, p. 2.

⁴¹⁹ Warden to Minister of Mines, 15 July 1915, Mines Department, MD 1, 23/4/54, ANZ-W.

⁴²⁰ Waitawheta Gold Mining Company, Directors’ Report to 31 July 1917, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 313 no. 1756, ANZ-A.

⁴²¹ Piako County Council, Minutes of Meeting of 28 November 1917, Matamata-Piako District Council Archives, *Te Aroha*; *Te Aroha News*, 21 December 1917, p. 2.

⁴²² *Te Aroha News*, 21 December 1917, p. 2.

⁴²³ See Brian Hill, ‘“The Little Man”: David Ziman, Mining Giant: The Biography of an Entrepreneur’ (Ph. D thesis, Flinders University of South Australia, 2000), pp. 139-141; *Waiuta: The gold mine, the town, the people*, ed. Gerard Morris (Reefton, 1986), p. 5; ‘Waihou and Ohinemuri Rivers (Report of Commission Appointed to Inquire into Silting of)’, *AJHR*, 1910, C-14, pp. 243-244, 305-305, 356-357; *Observer*, 10 September 1921, p. 6; Inquest into death of P.N. Kingswell, Justice Department, J 46, 1928/1151, ANZ-W; *New Zealand Herald*, 5 September 1928, p. 13.

in the district, he may have been a member of the syndicate as well. Timber and iron from the battery were sold early in 1918,⁴²⁴ and the final directors' report was written in late March:

As there is no possible hope of ever being able to start working again, and a good opportunity having occurred of selling the assets, it was carried into effect, and realized the sum of £250. As this did not cover our indebtedness the creditors have been approached with the offer of this sum, which it is believed they will accept.

A meeting of Shareholders will shortly be held to decide what is best to be done under the circumstances.⁴²⁵

The following month, shareholders agreed to wind up.⁴²⁶ As the battery had been valued at £1,750, its sale, along with other assets, for only £250 meant a great loss; with no assets remaining, the liquidator had 'nothing to wind up'.⁴²⁷

In June 1918, the Waitawheta Syndicate offered to sell its stone-crusher plant, water race, and battery site to the council, which, after first disclaiming any interest, bought them six months later for its Waiorongomai quarry at a bargain-basement price, £150.⁴²⁸

THE BENDIGO MINE AND BATTERY

According to rumour at Waiorongomai, Pond and the other owners of the Bendigo claim, being unable to come to any agreement with Edwin Henry Hardy⁴²⁹ for their ore to be treated at his battery, formed the

⁴²⁴ *Te Aroha News*, 30 January 1918, pp. 2, 3.

⁴²⁵ Waitawheta Gold Mining Company, Directors' Report to 31 January 1918, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 313 no. 1756, ANZ-A.

⁴²⁶ H.C. Choyce to Assistant Registrar of Companies, 18 June 1918, Waitawheta Gold Mining Company, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 313 no. 1756, ANZ-A.

⁴²⁷ Waitawheta Gold Mining Company, Balance Sheet, 7 November 1917; H.C. Choyce to Assistant Registrar of Companies, 18 June 1918, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 313 no. 1756, ANZ-A.

⁴²⁸ Piako County Council, Minutes of Meetings of 17 June 1918, 16 September 1918, 5 November 1918, 20 January 1919, Matamata-Piako District Council Archives, *Te Aroha*; *Te Aroha News*, Piako County Council, 19 June 1918, p. 3, 4 December 1918, p. 2.

⁴²⁹ See paper on his life.

Bendigo Company⁴³⁰ to treat their ore in their own battery.⁴³¹ In fact, Pond was neither an owner of this claim nor a founder of the company, in which he did not hold any interests, but he did become a member of the syndicate that worked the mine after the company collapsed in 1914.⁴³² From 1914 to 1918 work was done in the Bonanza and Cadman, 'partly on tribute and partly on day labour'.⁴³³ His partner was Dick Macky, and 'Tallentire and party' worked for him between 1917 and 1919, Tallentire being his manager.⁴³⁴

In October 1917, Pond and Joseph Carn Macky, Dick Macky's younger brother, who had held shares in both Waitawheta Companies and had power of attorney for Dick while he was fighting in France,⁴³⁵ had 130oz 10dwt of gold treated by the Bendigo battery. Valued at 7s 2d per ounce, it was worth £46 15s 3d, whereas other mines produced gold worth up to £3 9s 2d.⁴³⁶ Just before Christmas, Pond's battery manager, Arthur Charles Williams, died from appendicitis aged 41.⁴³⁷ His 'unforeseen' death was lamented by the Wesleyan community, as Williams, although childless, had superintended their Sunday Schools, first at Waiorongomai and then at Te Aroha. A man 'the church and the community could ill afford to spare',

⁴³⁰ For details of this company, see paper on financing goldmining companies.

⁴³¹ Les Hill, interviewed by David Bettison at Te Aroha, July 1975.

⁴³² Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 226 no. 1332, ANZ-A; 'Pond and Macky Bendigo Syndicate' to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 25 April 1918 (telegram), Mines Department, MD 1, 21/2/4, ANZ-W.

⁴³³ Declaration of J.A. Pond, 15 May 1922, Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1922, 10/1922, BCDG 11289/1a, ANZ-A.

⁴³⁴ Waiorongomai Correspondent, *Te Aroha News*, 7 March 1917, p. 2; Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1918, 5/1918, BCDG 11289/1a, ANZ-A; Matthew Paul to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 17 May 1917, Mines Department, MD 1, 17/18; Matthew Paul to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 11 March 1919, Mines Department, MD 1, 21/2/4, ANZ-W..

⁴³⁵ Macky, p. 48; Lists of Shareholders, Waitawheta Gold Prospecting Company, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 222 no. 1314; Lists of Shareholders, Waitawheta Gold Mining Company, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 226 no. 1332, ANZ-A; J.A. Pond and J.C. Macky to Minister of Mines, 27 May 1918, Mines Department, MD 1, 21/2/4, ANZ-W.

⁴³⁶ Bank of New Zealand, Gold Dealer's Book 1913-1932, entry for 31 October 1917; Thames Branch, Daily Gold Purchases 1916-1954, entry for 3 November 1917, Bank of New Zealand Archives, Wellington.

⁴³⁷ Death Certificate of Arthur Charles Williams, 19 December 1917, 1917/6635, BDM.

despite his declining health he had been ‘unselfish and uncomplaining’.⁴³⁸ In mid-January 1918, Pond sought Paul’s advice about his Bendigo mine:

We were getting on nicely with this and intended cleaning up just before Christmas when poor Williams was taken ill with Appendicitis & was taken to hospital, operated on same night & died the following morning. The poor fellow was very troubled that he had not been able to clean up, as though that mattered.

Pond asked for help to find someone to clean up the battery, meaning complete the treatment. Pond’s son Cecil was doing some mining on Great Barrier Island with a man who had been recommended.

Cecil has offered to go over from the farm & help me clean up & perhaps run the battery for a bit but I do not like to take him away from his work. Poor Dick Macky my co-owner is in France doing his “bit” & I want to keep matters going on his account. I have another trouble, there is no cyanide to be bought but think I can get over that by borrowing until the next shipment.⁴³⁹

In February 1918, when applying for the Bonanza, Pond told the warden that he would work the Cadman with Tallentire as his manager before starting work on this new ground.⁴⁴⁰ In April, Pond and Macky on behalf of the Bendigo Syndicate protested to the Mines Department at the council’s plans to remove the tramway rails: ‘Would be disastrous to all mining in the district’.⁴⁴¹ Late in May, Pond wrote to Paul opposing this intention. ‘I have no hesitation in saying that far more value will be won in this District in the future than has ever been banked’, and the tramway was vital for mining. His syndicate had bought the wire rope obtained for Butler’s Incline.⁴⁴² ‘We have had very considerable difficulty in obtaining supplies for the battery and a Manager for the same’, but having obtained the latter the battery would re-start once the hoppers were full. He asked Paul to protect the syndicate against the council, which was run by farmers.

⁴³⁸ *Te Aroha News*, 24 December 1917, p. 2.

⁴³⁹ J.A. Pond to Matthew Paul, 15 January 1918, Inspector of Mines, BBDO A902, M6, ANZ-A.

⁴⁴⁰ *Te Aroha Warden’s Court*, Mining Applications 1918, 5/1918, BCDG 11289/1a, ANZ-A.

⁴⁴¹ ‘Pond and Macky Bendigo Syndicate’ to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 25 April 1918 (telegram), Mines Department, MD 1, 21/2/4, ANZ-W.

⁴⁴² See paper on the Bendigo Battery.

‘We have expended a good deal of money during the past year preparing to work vigorously to regain that which we have spent or at all events some of it’.⁴⁴³ Two days later, when telling the minister they needed the tramway, Pond and Macky pointed out that Dick Macky had volunteered and it would be sad if he discovered that the mines were destroyed while he was ‘bravely fighting for his country’.⁴⁴⁴ (When he did return to New Zealand, in 1919, Macky once again became a public accountant,⁴⁴⁵ and had no further involvement with Waiorongomai.)

Paul reported that a considerable amount of ore was in the Bendigo hoppers awaiting treatment once Pond obtained sufficient cyanide.⁴⁴⁶ After the minister instructed that the rails must not be removed, Pond thanked Paul for his assistance. ‘I am now in treaty with a very good man to run the battery and have a share in the mine and I anticipate he will go up there next week to see what is required to make a start. I have had great difficulty in securing a battery manager’.⁴⁴⁷

In November 1918, Pond and John Eaton Reid⁴⁴⁸ left a bar of alloy estimated to be worth £17 with the manager of the Te Aroha branch of the Bank of New Zealand, who noted that they might ‘require advance up to £15 pending receipt of proceeds’.⁴⁴⁹ Early the following year, after obtaining an unrecorded amount of extra capital, Pond was able to do a ‘considerable amount’ of mining and to ‘greatly’ alter the Bendigo Battery and test the oil flotation process.⁴⁵⁰ Paul asked, in August 1920, for a small parcel to be sent to the Waihi School of Mines ‘for experimental purposes by the Oil

⁴⁴³ J.A. Paul to Matthew Paul, 25 May 1918, Inspector of Mines, BBDO A902, MM138, ANZ-A.

⁴⁴⁴ J.A. Pond and J.C. Macky to Minister of Mines, 27 May 1918, Mines Department, MD 1, 21/2/4, ANZ-W.

⁴⁴⁵ Macky, p. 48.

⁴⁴⁶ Matthew Paul to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 29 May 1918, Mines Department, MD 1, 21/2/4, ANZ-W.

⁴⁴⁷ J.A. Pond to Matthew Paul, 19 June 1918, Inspector of Mines, BBDO A902, MM138, ANZ-A.

⁴⁴⁸ See paper on the Bendigo Battery.

⁴⁴⁹ Bank of New Zealand, Te Aroha Branch, Manager’s Diary 1905-1919, entry for 16 November 1918, Bank of New Zealand Archives, Wellington.

⁴⁵⁰ Declaration of J.A. Pond, 15 May 1922, Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Mining Applications 1922-1923, 10/22, BCDG 11289/1a, ANZ-A.

Flotation Process'.⁴⁵¹ The results were to be sent to the company, but as there are no results on file, perhaps this sample was not sent. In March 1922, Pond purchased, from Percy Spencer,⁴⁵² the Cadman, 'men's huts', a smithy, tramways, and the Bendigo Battery and water race, all for £260.⁴⁵³ This purchase meant he held all the claims from the end of the 'Cadman extension' of the tramway to the top of the May Queen Incline.⁴⁵⁴

From 1923 until 1932 labour requirements were suspended for the Bonanza and Cadman and the battery, Pond paying an annual rent on all these properties; for instance, £6 each on the battery and water race.⁴⁵⁵ The first time he was granted protection for the Bonanza was in May 1923, for 12 months.⁴⁵⁶ His justification for seeking this, 'pending ore treatment', was that during the previous eight years both the Bonanza and Cadman had produced 'a little bullion but showed also that by the ordinary process of mercury treatment the ore could not possibly pay'. As 'attempts to recover the riches' from concentrates produced by his oil flotation process had 'proved a failure owing to the refractory nature of the ore', he had wanted to send them to Australia for treatment, but labour troubles and costs had forced the closure of Australian plants. Having expended over £5,700 during the past three years to obtain bullion worth £53, he had nearly exhausted his capital; he would seek more in New Zealand or England.⁴⁵⁷

In late 1922, Charles N. Taylor, representing Sydney investors, was arranging to acquire Hardy's Mines.⁴⁵⁸ He told Paul he was 'also arranging to secure an option over the Bendigo Mine' and that Pond was 'giving me his

⁴⁵¹ Matthew Paul to J.E. Reid, 3 August 1920, Inspector of Mines, BBDO A902, M6, ANZ-A.

⁴⁵² See paper on the Bendigo Battery.

⁴⁵³ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Registrations 1919-1922, no. 3290, BCDG 11288/7a, ANZ-A.

⁴⁵⁴ See map in Mines Department, MD 1, 10/7/23, ANZ-W.

⁴⁵⁵ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Register of Applications 1921-1934, hearings of 23 October 1923, 23 October 1924, 6 November 1925, 26 January 1927, 17 May 1928, 22 July 1929, 10 July 1930, 10 September 1931, 1 January 1932, BBAV 11505/6b; Register of Mining Privileges 1894-1910, folios 163, 168, BBAV 11500/2a, ANZ-A.

⁴⁵⁶ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Register of Applications 1921-1934, hearing of 17 May 1922, BBAV 11505/6b, ANZ-A.

⁴⁵⁷ Declaration of J.A. Pond, 15 May 1922, Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1922, 10/1922, BCDG 11289/1a, ANZ-A.

⁴⁵⁸ See paper on this company.

assistance to bring about an amalgamation of the two concerns so that I will have a better proposition to offer'.⁴⁵⁹ Pond contacted an agent for Freeman and Company of Sydney,⁴⁶⁰ then visiting Auckland, in the hope that this firm would 'work the whole of the Waiorongomai Mines as one holding'. He obtained 'average samples of the oil flotation concentrates of which we have 10 or 12 tons valued at over £50 per ton' for the firm to test.⁴⁶¹ These concentrates had been produced from the Silver Queen lode, and he spent some months trying to get them treated in Australia.⁴⁶² In May, in seeking the suspension of labour conditions on both his claims, he told the warden of a good prospect of forming a company to work his property along with Hardy's Mines' ground. 'The Company which is considering the matter in Sydney desire my presence there to place the matter clearly before them and to arrange for one of their Engineers to inspect the property'. When in Australia he would endeavour to arrange for the 'conversion of the concentrates which if it can be successfully carried out is an important matter for this portion of the Mining District'.⁴⁶³ One month later he explained the difficulties encountered in Australia:

On arrival in Sydney I found that concentrates cannot be dealt with in Australia all the works having being shut down owing to labour troubles and that the large samples which I had supplied had been sent to New York, this being the only place they advise me where these mineral concentrates can be dealt with, and it will be some time before the Company can get data on which to purchase them. I have had several interviews with the Company in reference to working the properties and though they think well of them they will not do more until they obtain a reply from New York.⁴⁶⁴

⁴⁵⁹ C.N. Taylor to Matthew Paul, 12 December 1922, Inspector of Mines, BBDO A902, M6, ANZ-A.

⁴⁶⁰ Formed by Ambrose William Freeman and William Addison Freeman? See *Australian Dictionary of Biography: vol. 8: 1891-1939* (Melbourne, 1981), pp. 583-584.

⁴⁶¹ J.A. Pond to Matthew Paul, 6 June 1923, Inspector of Mines, BBDO A902, MM8, ANZ-A.

⁴⁶² J.A. Pond to Matthew Paul, 6 September 1924, Inspector of Mines, BBDO A902, MM8, ANZ-A.

⁴⁶³ Declaration of J.A. Pond, 3 May 1923, Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1923, 43/1923, BCDG 11289/1a, ANZ-A.

⁴⁶⁴ J.A. Pond to Matthew Paul, 6 June 1923, Inspector of Mines, BBDO A902, MM8, ANZ-A.

Pond expected that if the samples proved satisfactory he would be able to induce Freeman and Company to provide capital.⁴⁶⁵ As sending concentrates to New York cost '£10 per ton & further penalties', he received 'hardly any return for the cost of winning and crushing', and his attempts to interest other Australian companies in his properties were also 'without success'.⁴⁶⁶ All he obtained from crossing the Tasman was the chance 'to see a good deal of Australia'.⁴⁶⁷

In September 1924, Pond complained that 'the abnormal rains of last Winter have caused such heavy slips on the roads and tramway' that he could not get material to the mine, take ore to the battery, or remove concentrates from the latter. He was still 'convinced that Te Aroha has further deposits of auriferous ore and have done my utmost to keep a battery intact on the field for the purpose of dealing with such ores'. Being also convinced that his concentrates could be treated in New Zealand, he was 'erecting a furnace for the purpose of testing this possibility'.⁴⁶⁸

If Pond reported to the mining inspector in 1925 or 1926, his reports have not survived. In December 1926, he attempted to auction the Cadman and Bonanza mines, his battery, and 'about 4 tons tailings, estimated value about £50 a ton'.⁴⁶⁹ Although there were no bids, in the following month an agent thought he could get investors interested.⁴⁷⁰ By then his syndicate had spent over £5,000 in their 'long, costly and anxious work', and could not consider the offer to send concentrates to New York

owing to our being unable to get the concentrates along the road – track – to Waiorongomai. We purchased a cable for the Butler's

⁴⁶⁵ Matthew Paul to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 25 June 1923, Mines Department, MD 1, 10/7/23, ANZ-W.

⁴⁶⁶ J.A. Pond to Matthew Paul, 17 January 1927, Inspector of Mines, BBDO A902, M6; J.A. Pond to Matthew Paul, 6 September 1924, Inspector of Mines, BBDO A902, MM8, ANZ-A.

⁴⁶⁷ J.A. Pond to Matthew Paul, 6 June 1923, Inspector of Mines, BBDO A902, MM8, ANZ-A.

⁴⁶⁸ J.A. Pond to Matthew Paul, 6 September 1924, Inspector of Mines, BBDO A902, MM8, ANZ-A.

⁴⁶⁹ Advertisement, *Te Aroha News*, 3 December 1926, p. 1.

⁴⁷⁰ J.A. Pond to Matthew Paul, 17 January 1927 [first, brief, letter of that date], Inspector of Mines, BBDO A902, M6, ANZ-A.

grade but the Government Tramway hangs suspended in the air for a long distance.

I am getting too old now & have spent too much money to make it possible to do more and yet I wish that the battery may remain in the District for I am sure there is payable ore there, if saved by the oil flotation process which is quite a success.

Lately I have been approached by an agent who professes a desire to get the whole concern on an option. He has gone to some trouble and to help in the matter I have offered the battery, mines, huts and plant for £250 less Commission and some shares in any Company which may be floated to work the property. On this account I am again applying for suspension of labour conditions. If these are not granted I can see nothing but wrecking the only crushing plant in the district.⁴⁷¹

In January 1927 Paul reported that Pond had sent men to bag concentrates to send to New York, but because the council had destroyed the lower road with 'deep cuttings in their large quarry' it was unusable by either sledge or packhorse. (And using the tramway was no longer viable, the tunnel near the base of Butler's Incline having collapsed for the final time.)⁴⁷² 'At the time when quarry operations were in progress no work was being done in this mine or battery and I had a distinct understanding with the County Engineer that he would repair any damage done to the road'. Pond was negotiating with an agent 'who thinks he can interest some people to investigate and purchase the whole as a going concern. It would be a great loss to the district if Mr Pond was compelled to sell this battery as there are distinct indications of a revival in mining'.⁴⁷³

Thirteen months later, Pond provided the latest details of his efforts:

I have been unable to comply with the labour conditions on these licenses or interest any one here or abroad to take them up for working. I am unable to do so alone and think it better to apply to the Court for the relinquishment of these licenses.... I have offered the mine and battery on tribute without success & offered the whole for sale at Auction without obtaining a bid. I have spent a great deal of money on the property which I still think a

⁴⁷¹ J.A. Pond to Matthew Paul, 17 January 1927, Inspector of Mines, BBDO A902, M6, ANZ-A.

⁴⁷² See paper on the Piako County tramway at Waiorongomai.

⁴⁷³ Matthew Paul to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 24 January 1927, Mines Department, MD 1, 10/7/23, ANZ-W.

good one, but age and impoverishment render it necessary for me to give it up.

As the road to his battery was still impassable because of the quarry, a new road was needed. He was 'loath to see the battery broken up & lost to the field & would rather give it to the Government than that, & some effort should be made to retain it there', as he would discuss with Paul.⁴⁷⁴

He had exaggerated his 'impoverishment'. When his wife died in 1935 she left an estate of almost £12,000, and six years later his estate was worth just over £11,271.⁴⁷⁵ And he did not fund this work unaided, as other investors, names unrecorded, assisted.⁴⁷⁶

Paul reported that the concentrates contained insufficient bullion 'to pay for shipment and treatment'.⁴⁷⁷ Two months later, in May 1928, Pond told the warden that for many years he had spent 'much time and money' and was 'loath to give up my endeavours to treat & deal with' the ore. The mine was in working order, with both timber and rails intact. The best ore was 'of a refractory nature', located 'in small pockets' and not able to be treated. Although the 'several' tons of 'oil flotation concentrates' stored in the battery could not be sold locally, there was 'a possible market in New York', but 'owing to the deep cuttings' at the quarry 'my employees have found it impossible to get out these concentrates by sledge or pack horses without making a new road'. It had cost him a 'great deal' to keep the battery going, and he was trying to raise capital in New Zealand, England, and America, or instead to find a purchaser for the only 'active mine' at Waiorongomai.⁴⁷⁸ Paul considered his mine could not 'be worked by

⁴⁷⁴ J.A. Pond to Matthew Paul, 20 February 1928, Inspector of Mines, BBDO A902, MM8, ANZ-A.

⁴⁷⁵ Probate of Bertha Pond, Probates, BBAE 1570, 217/35; probate of J.A. Pond, Probates, BBAE 1570, 517/41, ANZ-A.

⁴⁷⁶ J.A. Pond to Matthew Paul, 17 January 1927, Inspector of Mines, BBDO A902, M6, ANZ-A.

⁴⁷⁷ Matthew Paul to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 14 March 1928, Mines Department, MD 1, 10/7/23, ANZ-W.

⁴⁷⁸ Declaration of J.A. Pond, 11 May 1928, Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1928, 11/1928, BCDG 11289/2a, ANZ-A.

tributors on account of the refractory character of the richest ore, which occurs in pockets'.⁴⁷⁹

In July 1929, Pond, who had still not sold the concentrates, claimed to be 'satisfied that there is a good future for the mine if finance can be obtained'.⁴⁸⁰ Around that time, samples were taken from a lode in the Bonanza,⁴⁸¹ presumably for showing to potential investors. Because he had not obtained any capital, John Francis Downey, the new mining inspector, thought someone else should have the chance to try to do so, and therefore this should be the last time labour conditions were suspended.⁴⁸² Accepting this advice, the minister declared himself 'not prepared to assent to the granting of any further suspension',⁴⁸³ but then with the onset of the depression did permit further suspensions.

WAIORONGOMA1 MINING DURING THE DEPRESSION

In July 1930, Pond informed Downey that, 'some months' previously, he had given an option over all his properties to John William McCoy, a mining engineer,⁴⁸⁴ who had sent some men to examine them. 'Having satisfied himself of their value, he now proposes to put on more men to further test the ground and place it in order for extensive working'. Four men would be employed within two weeks. He claimed to have 'made considerable sacrifices to keep the plant intact and available when needed'.⁴⁸⁵ In applying for permission to employ fewer men than required, he stated that, having failed to raise capital, he had given an option to

⁴⁷⁹ Matthew Paul to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 1 June 1928, Mines Department, MD 1, 10/7/23, ANZ-W.

⁴⁸⁰ Declaration of J.A. Pond, 19 July 1929, Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1929, 12/1929, BCDG 11289/2a, ANZ-A.

⁴⁸¹ W.J. Gibbs to C.E. McMillan, 17 November 1931, Mines Department, MD 1, 10/7/23, ANZ-W.

⁴⁸² J.F. Downey to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 31 July 1929, Mines Department, MD 1, 10/7/23, ANZ-W.

⁴⁸³ Under-Secretary, Mines Department, to Warden, 9 August 1929, Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1929, 12/1929, BCDG 11289/2a, ANZ-A.

⁴⁸⁴ See paper on prospectors and investors in the Te Aroha district in the 1930s.

⁴⁸⁵ J.A. Pond to J.F. Downey, 9 July 1930, Mines Department, MD 1, 10/7/23, ANZ-W.

McCoy, on behalf of the Ngahere Gold Prospecting Company,⁴⁸⁶ formed in 1925 to dredge an area at Blackball, on the West Coast of the South Island; lack of funds had forced it to cease operations.⁴⁸⁷

In the following February, McCoy reported that after a Sydney mining engineer, one of the option holders, visited at the end of the month a decision would be made about providing capital. It had cost over £200 to employ two men to examine and prospect the ground.⁴⁸⁸ The potential Sydney investors did not take up the properties.

In September 1931, when applying once more for the suspension of labour conditions, Pond stated that, since July, the mine had been worked by four men. 'Much development has been done and a considerable sum of money spent', but as the Depression meant a fall in the price of base metals contained in the ore he could obtain neither capital nor markets.⁴⁸⁹ In seeking a reduction in rent, Pond's lawyer admitted to the warden that Pond 'had been told some time ago that no further suspension would be granted', for one license had been held since 1906 and the most recent since 1918.

Recently the claims had been worked under a certificate of reduction to four men. The ore was difficult to treat and though there were now much improved methods it was impossible under present conditions to show a return. The rent was £40 a year and there had been paid altogether £743 in rent.

Pond was 'prepared to pay the full rent next year' if the warden 'would assist him in the matter of labour. If the application was refused it would

⁴⁸⁶ Declaration of J.A. Pond, 7 July 1930, Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1930, 13/1930, BCDG 11289/1a; Register of Mining Privileges 1894-1910, folio 130, BBAV 11500/2a; Horace McCoy to Receiver of Gold Revenue, Te Aroha, 12 May 1933, Mining Applications 1933, 3/1933, BCDG 11289/2a, ANZ-A; Warden's Court, *Te Aroha News*, 14 September 1931, p. 5.

⁴⁸⁷ Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 691 no. 2867, ANZ-A; Minister of Mines to S.L. Smith, 4 July 1930, Mines Department, MD 1, 10/12/9; *Evening Post* (Wellington), 8 April 1932, press cutting in Mines Department, MD 1, 10/7/23, ANZ-W.

⁴⁸⁸ J.W. McCoy to J.F. Downey, 11 February 1931, Inspector of Mines, BBDO A902, MM8, ANZ-A; J.F. Downey to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 17 February 1931, Mines Department, MD 1, 10/7/23, ANZ-W.

⁴⁸⁹ Declaration of J.A. Pond, 8 September 1931, Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1931, 18/1931, BCDG 11289/1a, ANZ-A.

mean the breaking up of a battery valued at about £1000. This battery was in readiness for work but had not been used for eight years and perhaps longer'. McCoy stated Pond was willing to allow

the use of his battery by any adjoining claim owner. The collapse of the money market made it necessary to postpone efforts to raise finance. It would cost over £18 per hundred to get money from Sydney now. Copper was now only worth £31 per ton and Mr Pond's mine could not be worked profitably while the price was under £60. It was thought it would be best to postpone further efforts for another year. There had been as many as 30 men employed at the mine and they would have the same number again if conditions sufficiently improved. No men were employed at present but men had been employed intermittently during the past 18 months. Witness had spent £230 out of his own pocket during that time. They could spend £25,000 or £30,000 and a small expenditure would be of no use. He was certain that the ore was highly valuable but a plant would have to be installed and the stuff would have to be shipped overseas for treatment.

After the warden promised to recommend protection 'provided the rent was paid', McCoy promised to pay this. 'He mentioned that a sum of approximately £10,000 had been spent' since Pond owned the ground, a questionable estimate. From £30,000 to £35,000 was 'required to make the areas produce regularly and to the best advantage'.

There was great difficulty in raising the necessary capital owing to the prevailing depression. The necessary finance was promised to him in Sydney and this would still be available as soon as the market recovered. In recent months he had spent £280 in developing the claims, in driving 100ft on the Goldsworthy reef and in prospecting. Further expenditure and work was useless until the market recovers and it would be a severe blow to the prospects of mining in the district if the present battery was 'broken up and removed'.⁴⁹⁰

Commenting on this hearing, the *Te Aroha News* praised Pond's 'admirable courage' in retaining his claims and spending £10,000 on prospecting and development. 'It would be very hard on Mr Pond if, after all

⁴⁹⁰ Declaration of J.W. McCoy, 10 September 1921, Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1931, 18/1931, BCDG 11289/1a, ANZ-A; Warden's Court, *Te Aroha News*, 14 September 1931, p. 5.

he has spent, he should be obliged to lose everything while there is a prospect of success'.⁴⁹¹

In asking the Mines Department to continue protection, the warden explained that Pond had spent almost £500 on rent and was prepared to keep paying £40 each year and to let tributers use his battery. 'Perhaps the strongest argument in applicant's favour is that no one is likely to take up the ground if it is thrown open'.⁴⁹² On the same day that this letter was written, Walter James Gibbs, who was trying to develop part of the field,⁴⁹³ wrote to the minister claiming that no work had been done in Pond's 120 acres since 1922. 'Pond has never complied with any of the conditions to man the ground since 1922, with one exception only, of three men being employed for six days obtaining samples about three years ago'. He opposed more protection being granted because he wanted to prospect the ground, for reefs in his claims extended into it.⁴⁹⁴ Gibbs told the warden that he had known the claims since 1917, and when visiting them daily over the past 14 months nobody had been working them. The highest number employed had been three, in 1929, and although the Goldsworthy reef was sampled in 1929, he denied that 100 feet had been driven.⁴⁹⁵ In the light of Gibbs' letter, the warden withdrew his approval of more protection.⁴⁹⁶ A week later, the Te Aroha Chamber of Commerce protested to the Minister about Pond not working his ground, for it understood that if he gave it up 'a Company with the necessary capital' was ready to work it, thereby providing unemployment.⁴⁹⁷

Once Gibbs' accusations became common knowledge, attempts were made to refute them. Early in October, Pond informed Downey that he had visited the mines, on an unspecified date but apparently in 1930,

⁴⁹¹ Editorial, *Te Aroha News*, 16 September 1931, p. 4.

⁴⁹² Warden to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 10 September 1931, Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1931, 18/1931, BCDG 11289/1a, ANZ-A.

⁴⁹³ See paper on prospectors and investors in the Te Aroha district in the 1930s.

⁴⁹⁴ W.J. Gibbs to Minister of Mines, 10 September 1931, Mines Department, MD 1, 10/7/23, ANZ-W.

⁴⁹⁵ Declaration of W.J. Gibbs, n.d. [September 1931], Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1931, 18/1931, BCDG 11289/1a, ANZ-A.

⁴⁹⁶ Warden to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 28 September 1931, Mines Department, MD 1, 10/7/23, ANZ-W.

⁴⁹⁷ Secretary, Te Aroha Chamber of Commerce, to Minister of Mines, 5 October 1931, Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1931, 18/1931, BCDG 11289/1a, ANZ-A.

to advise regarding the two main lodes & was pleased at the progress then being made in clearing and retimbering the old Waiorongomai drive to the face, the extension of which will cut the Bonanza and other lodes at a considerable depth. Unfortunately my health has prevented my getting up there since.⁴⁹⁸

In mid-October, just before going to Australia to raise capital,⁴⁹⁹ McCoy protested that, although Gibbs claimed no work had been done for three years, Pond had spent £230. Gibbs had perpetrated 'a wicked untruth and I have instructed my Solicitor to proceed against him for libel'.⁵⁰⁰ Although the threatened libel suit did not occur, in early December Pond's lawyer, Peter Gilchrist, 'claimed that already £9,000 had been spent in the area', notably less than claimed three months earlier. '£256 had been spent in the last two years', and 'fresh capital from Australia' was being awaited before doing further work. When Gibbs claimed that 'during the past 14 months no work whatever had been done on the claim, which in its present state was impeding the progress of prospecting in the valley', Gilchrist noted that Gibbs

had been in court when the case was first heard and had made no objection. He later wrote to the Minister of Mines and it was understood that his letter contained a statement that notwithstanding the sworn evidence of the applicant and witnesses no work had been done on the claim for two years. Such a statement was untrue. It was a most objectionable and wicked action. Mr Gibbs had also supplied the Chamber of Commerce with information that was incorrect.

He wanted a copy of his letter to the minister, as Pond had been 'attacked in the dark'. Gibbs' lawyer responded that Pond 'should know the law. He had held the claim through prosperous years and had simply let it lie. Now when there were 50,000 unemployed in the land he sought to block the area from being prospected'. Gibbs then gave evidence:

⁴⁹⁸ J.A. Pond to J.F Downey, 11 October 1932, Inspector of Mines, BBDO A902, MM8, ANZ-A.

⁴⁹⁹ Gilchrist Son and Burns to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 19 October 1931, Mines Department, MD 1, 10/7/23, ANZ-W.

⁵⁰⁰ J.W. McCoy to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 16 October 1931, Mines Department, MD 1, 10/7/23, ANZ-W.

He had known the claims since 1917 and particularly during the last 14 months. In the latter period there was nothing to disclose the presence of other workmen. There were no residences erected for habitation till his men had patched up an old stable once belonging to the company. Witness gave a detailed description as to the condition of the battery on the field. It was not in working order.

If Pond 'had spent £250 in the last two years in developing the claim there was nothing to show for it. He himself had been up there almost daily during that time and would have seen any person who was regularly employed'. Asked whether he would drop his objection if Pond went ahead with the proposed prospecting, Gibbs responded: 'Yes, certainly'. Gilchrist then stated that Pond expected to receive 'finance from Australia' in six months' time, and a visit by an Australian expert, arranged by McCoy, was expected later that month. 'Following his report it is hoped to raise £30,000 but the matter of exchange is a serious hindrance. My client will be prepared to employ four men on the claim right away'.⁵⁰¹ During the hearing, Pond and Gibbs came to an 'amicable agreement', Gibbs and the Chamber of Commerce withdrew their objections, and the warden recommended that Pond be given further protection, which was approved.⁵⁰²

Just after the hearing, the minister was told that a miner working for Pond and McCoy had stated that the only work done during the past two years was when three men took six days to open up a drive to obtain samples from its face.⁵⁰³ In August, Pond had been sued for forfeiture plus rent owed of £98 8s 9d, but this case was struck out five months later presumably because the rent was paid. He had applied in August for a reduction of rent on all his properties, but withdrew his application in February 1932.⁵⁰⁴ Also in the latter month, an application by William

⁵⁰¹ *Te Aroha News*, 7 December 1931, p. 1.

⁵⁰² Warden to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 15 December 1931; Under-Secretary, Mines Department, to Mining Registrar, 26 January 1932, *Te Aroha Warden's Court*, Mining Applications 1931, 18/1931, BCDG 11289/2a, ANZ-A.

⁵⁰³ Charles Scott to Minister of Mines, 8 December 1931, Mines Department, MD 1, 10/7/23, ANZ-W.

⁵⁰⁴ *Te Aroha Warden's Court*, Register of Mining Applications 1921-1934, hearing of 18 February 1932, BBAV 11505/6b, ANZ-A.

Goodfellow⁵⁰⁵ to forfeit both claims was withdrawn, as was Gibbs' application to forfeit the Cadman.⁵⁰⁶ Gibbs had told the minister that at the December hearing he had agreed to drop his objection if four men were employed, but none had been engaged. Although McCoy claimed to have spent £230 driving 100 feet on the Goldsworthy reef, 'I state definitely that the work was never done'. As his employees were camping on Pond's ground he visited them regularly, but he had never seen any of Pond's men.⁵⁰⁷ Despite his claim that no work had been done, the Mines Department received details of payments totalling £256 11s 4d for 'prospecting and tunnelling work', almost all by two men, between September 1929 and October 1930 on the claims held under option from Pond.⁵⁰⁸

In April 1932, it was reported that the Ngahere Company had resumed operations in the Bonanza and planned to drive on the Silver King reef from the low level of the Cadman.⁵⁰⁹ The following month, the low level in the Bonanza was being made accessible in readiness for driving to cut four promising reefs; if this work 'proved satisfactory', large-scale working was planned.⁵¹⁰ In July, this company sought council and Mines Department support for clearing the road to the battery, illegally destroyed by the quarry, so machinery could be taken up.⁵¹¹ Also in that month, the company's drive in the Bonanza had struck such hard rock 'that pending the installation of a rock drilling plant driving is too expensive'.⁵¹²

In October, when Pond sought protection for both claims yet again, Downey found 'it difficult to know how to report' because he had held the

⁵⁰⁵ See paper on prospectors and investors in the Te Aroha district in the 1930s.

⁵⁰⁶ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Record Book 1899-1946, hearing of 8 February 1932, BBAV 11547/1b, ANZ-A.

⁵⁰⁷ W.J. Gibbs to Minister of Mines, 16 February 1932, Mines Department, MD 1, 10/7/23, ANZ-W.

⁵⁰⁸ 'Waiorongomai Metals A/C', n.d. [1932], Mines Department, MD 1, 10/7/23, ANZ-W.

⁵⁰⁹ *Evening Post*, 8 April 1932, press cutting in Mines Department, MD 1, 10/7/23, ANZ-W.

⁵¹⁰ *Evening Post*, 12 May 1932, press cutting in Mines Department, MD 1, 10/7/23, ANZ-W.

⁵¹¹ J.W. McCoy to Chairman, Piako County Council, 8 July 1932; J.W. McCoy to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 25 July 1932; W. Smith (Public Works office, Paeroa) to Assistant Engineer, Public Works Office, Paeroa, 29 August 1932; Under-Secretary, Public Works Department, to J.W. McCoy, 5 November 1932, Public Works Department, BAAS 5113, A269/21, ANZ-A.

⁵¹² Ngahere Gold Prospecting Company to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 25 July 1932, Mines Department, MD 1, 21/2/41, ANZ-W.

claims and battery 'for at least nine or ten years now without making any attempt to work them bona-fide'. McCoy's option on behalf of the Ngahere Company had resulted in 'a certain amount of work' being done, consisting 'mainly, if not entirely, of the cleaning up and repairing of an old level, two men being employed, and even these not regularly for the whole time'. Because of this limited activity and the 'strong feeling' in Te Aroha against further suspension of labour conditions, it was 'very questionable if the application should be granted'.⁵¹³ He considered Pond had done 'very little work indeed'.⁵¹⁴ At the hearing, after a miner stated that no work had been done since July 1932, Pond withdrew his application, and both claims were forfeited to Clive Nettleton,⁵¹⁵ another investor.⁵¹⁶

In mid-1933, Pond was required to pay £8 8s of the £9 rent due on these claims, and only avoided forfeiting his battery and water race by paying £12 12s into court.⁵¹⁷ The Ngahere Company, which retained its option despite being in liquidation, paid this amount, and asked that 'further action against Mr Pond' should be suspended until shareholders provided the money required to pay the rent. Its secretary described Pond as '87 years old and in ill-health',⁵¹⁸ making any active involvement in mining even more difficult.

In August, Pond contributed to the prospectus of Waiorongomai Gold Mines Ltd,⁵¹⁹ incorporated in November 1933; the vendor was Nettleton.⁵²⁰ Pond gave an overview of the lodes in the Cadman and Bonanza, summarizing what little work had been done on most of them, and encouraging their development by the new company. He concluded by describing how he had modified the battery to use the oil flotation process,

⁵¹³ J.F. Downey to Warden, 26 October 1932, Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1932, 35/1932, BCDG 11289/2a, ANZ-A.

⁵¹⁴ J.F. Downey to Warden, 14 August 1933, Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1933, 43/1933, BCDG 11289/2a, ANZ-A.

⁵¹⁵ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Record Book 1899-1946, hearing of 20 October 1932, BBAV 11547/1b; Mining Applications 1932, 1, 2, 35/1932, BCDG 11289/2a, ANZ-A.

⁵¹⁶ See paper on prospectors and investors in the Te Aroha district in the 1930s.

⁵¹⁷ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Record Book 1899-1946, hearings of 8 June 1933, 19 July 1933, BBAV 11547/1b, ANZ-A.

⁵¹⁸ Horace McCoy to Receiver of Gold Revenue, Te Aroha, 12 May 1933, Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1933, 3/1933, BCDG 11289/2a, ANZ-A.

⁵¹⁹ See paper on company formation in the 1930s.

⁵²⁰ Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 695 no. 4544, ANZ-A.

which ‘small tests ... proved a remarkable success’. It could be put in working order for ‘very little cost’.⁵²¹ Despite his endorsement, he did not acquire any shares in the company, which had intended to purchase the two claims and his battery.⁵²² As it did not acquire the battery and its water race, Pond retained them, but had to be sued to enforce payment of rent in 1936.⁵²³ They were surrendered after his death.⁵²⁴

POLITICAL VIEWS

When his nephew, Professor Charles Alexander MacLean Pond, died in 1893, Pond wrote to the press expressing gratitude for ‘the many kind expressions of sympathy and regret’ received. He considered it ‘my duty to forward all written communications to those who mourn his loss so greatly in the dear old home’,⁵²⁵ meaning England.

Until his death, Pond retained a ‘keen interest’ in current affairs.⁵²⁶ His only involvement in politics was at a local level. In 1878, when standing as a candidate for the Takapuna Riding of the Waitemata County Council, he stated that ‘it was not at his wish that he accepted the position of a candidate’.⁵²⁷ This tepid enthusiasm resulted in him receiving the second-lowest number of votes.⁵²⁸ That he continued to be interested in local matters was indicated by his letter, with another concerned resident, to Remuera ratepayers in 1901 warning against a hasty rush to establish a water supply before the cost and, in particular, drainage had been determined.⁵²⁹ Ten years later, the *Observer* commented that his speech to the city council

⁵²¹ J.A. Pond to Secretary, Waiorongomai Gold Mines, 21 August 1933, Prospectus of Waiorongomai Gold Mines, pp. 4-5, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 695 no. 4544, ANZ-A.

⁵²² Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 695 no. 4544, ANZ-A.

⁵²³ Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Mining Applications and Complaints 1936, 3/1936, BCDG 11289/3a, ANZ-A.

⁵²⁴ Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Mining Applications 1942, 5/1942, BCDG 11289/3a, ANZ-A.

⁵²⁵ *Auckland Weekly News*, 4 November 1893, p. 35.

⁵²⁶ *New Zealand Herald*, 9 June 1941, p. 9.

⁵²⁷ *Auckland Weekly News*, 9 November 1878, p. 18.

⁵²⁸ *Auckland Weekly News*, 16 November 1878, p. 6.

⁵²⁹ Letter from J.A. Pond and F.B. Winstone, *New Zealand Herald*, 30 April 1901, p. 3.

in the interests of Hobson-street property-owners proved to the Councillors that not all the eloquence of Auckland is bottled up amongst its municipal governors. It was Mr Pond's first night out in several years, and he made the most of the occasion. By terms historical, argumentative, pathetic, his speech ran the gamut of nearly all phases of rhetoric save the humour – Mr Pond didn't attempt even the feeblest jokelet. But he played upon the feelings of the City Fathers to a turn that they haven't heard for many a long day. All the Councillors regarded the orator enviously.⁵³⁰

If unsuccessful in winning public office, in the early twentieth century he was on the committee of the New Zealand Society for the Protection of Women and Children and the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.⁵³¹ His wife shared his views, her will leaving £25 to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.⁵³²

RELAXATION

In 1875, Pond contributed a painting, presumably by himself, to the Auckland Society of Artists' exhibition.⁵³³ No other reference has been found to other paintings, and his usual ways of relaxing were physical. In 1882 the *Observer* joked that he felt 'a scientific enthusiasm for dancing in general, and a perfect frenzy for the giddy whirl of the galop in particular'.⁵³⁴ In 1900, 'on behalf of the Auckland Cycle Road League', he sent some of its pamphlets on 'Road Repair and Maintenance' to a Waikato newspaper.⁵³⁵ By the early twentieth century, with an ear, nose, and throat surgeon he was a partner in a yacht.⁵³⁶

PERSONALITY

⁵³⁰ *Observer*, 18 February 1911, p. 4.

⁵³¹ *New Zealand Herald*, 29 April 1904, p. 7.

⁵³² Probates, BBAE 1560, 217/35, ANZ-A.

⁵³³ *Auckland Weekly News*, 20 November 1875, p. 21.

⁵³⁴ *Observer*, 25 November 1882, p. 169.

⁵³⁵ *Waikato Argus*, 22 October 1900, p. 4.

⁵³⁶ Nola Esdale, *Five Gentlemen's Residences in Princes Street, Auckland* (Auckland, 1980), p. 42.

Pond was described in 1882 as ‘a fussy and well-read little man, whose chief peculiarities are a profuse growth of hair brushed well back over the head, so as to show the extent of his cranial development, and a queer habit of mouthing his words when speaking’.⁵³⁷ When a journalist was shown quartz taken from the Kaimanawa district in 1891, he wrote that he would take it to Pond, ‘and if he is not too busy making butter-boxes, he will test it for us. Good fellow, Pond, but an awful bad punster. I won’t risk one of his atrocities on you without a smelling bottle. You might faint’.⁵³⁸

FAMILY

In October 1866 Pond hoped that one or more of his close relations or friends would join him in the colony.⁵³⁹ One nephew, Charles Alexander MacLean Pond, took up his post as Professor of English and Classics at Auckland University College in June 1891,⁵⁴⁰ but died two years later, aged only 29, lamented by colleagues, students, and many ‘prominent citizens’. Like his uncle, he had supported the Auckland Institute, of which he was president at the time of his death.⁵⁴¹ ‘A man of great energy, he had literally worked himself to death’, institute members believed.⁵⁴² Another nephew, Willie Hamblett, was vicar of St Matthew’s Church in Dunedin in 1941 when bequeathed £50 from his uncle’s will, and his sister received the same sum; a niece, Florence Grace Pond, also of Dunedin, received £40. His six grandchildren received £250 each, and Mary Combes of Auckland, an unmarried relative of his wife’s, was bequeathed £30. He also left legacies to friends.⁵⁴³

In 1875, when aged 28, he had married Bertha Combes; as she was 19, permission was given by her mother, Eleanor Sarah, her father, Walter, a

⁵³⁷ *Observer*, 25 November 1882, p. 169.

⁵³⁸ ‘A Tramp, Esq.’, *Casual Ramblings: Up and down New Zealand* (Auckland, 1891), p. 78.

⁵³⁹ Pond, ‘Voyage’, p. 57.

⁵⁴⁰ *Observer*, 27 June 1891, p. 6.

⁵⁴¹ Death Certificate of Charles Alexander MacLean Pond, 28 October 1893, 1893/4052, BDM; *New Zealand Herald*, 30 October 1893, p. 5; *Auckland Star*, 31 October 1893, p. 2.

⁵⁴² *Centennial History*, p. 55.

⁵⁴³ Probates, BBAE 1570, 517/41, ANZ-A; details of his extended family provided by Wendy Pond to Philip Hart, 21 December 2005, email.

merchant and customs agent, having died five years previously.⁵⁴⁴ Their only child, Herbert Cecil, was born in February 1878.⁵⁴⁵ Known as Cecil, in the twentieth century he farmed at Hinuera.⁵⁴⁶

Bertha was the first to die, in March 1935.⁵⁴⁷ Her many friends were remembered in her will. She left an estate of £11,890 14s 2d, enabling her to give legacies to these friends and an annuity of £400 to Pond, who also inherited her 'dwellinghouse and the land upon which the same stands'.⁵⁴⁸ He died in June 1941, from heart failure, having suffered from chronic bronchitis for at least the last two years of his life.⁵⁴⁹ His estate of £11,271 1s 2d enabled him to give legacies to family and friends and to create a memorial to Thomas Cheeseman of the Auckland Institute and Museum.⁵⁵⁰

CONCLUSION

Pond was a fine scientist with a lively interest in many facets of nature, and with skills that enabled him to invent such a good butter box that it was pirated by the Victorian government. Interested in mining off and on through his long life, his technical skills could not triumph over the problem of finding a successful and profitable way of treating low-grade Waiorongomai ores. Throughout his life he was favourably regarded, as in 1880, when the *Observer* described him as 'one of the benevolent men in Auckland. Numerous poor families can testify to his many acts of kindness and liberality in supplying them with remedies free of charge'. Moreover, he does it "by stealth," too, and will doubtless blush now he has been found

⁵⁴⁴ Notice of Intention to Marry, Births Deaths and Marriages, BDM 20/20, folio 095, ANZ-W; Marriage Certificate of James Alexander Pond, 5 July 1875, 1875/1880, BDM; *Auckland Weekly News*, 10 July 1875, p. 23; Death Certificate of Walter Combes, 30 May 1870, 1870/5862, BDM; Probate of Walter Combes, Probates, BBAE 1568/415, ANZ-A; *New Zealand Herald*, 1 June 1870, p. 4, 31 March 1924, p. 9.

⁵⁴⁵ Birth Certificate of Herbert Cecil Pond, 8 February 1878, 1878/510, BDM; Hamilton Register of Baptisms 1872-1899, no. 193, Anglican Diocesan Archives, Hamilton.

⁵⁴⁶ Lists of Shareholders in Waitawheta Gold Mining Company, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 313 no. 1756; Probates, BBAE 1570, 217/35, ANZ-A.

⁵⁴⁷ Death Certificate of Bertha Pond, 12 March 1935, 1935/13097, BDM.

⁵⁴⁸ Probates, BBAE 1570, 217/35, ANZ-A.

⁵⁴⁹ Death Certificate of James Alexander Pond, 8 June 1941, 1941/18603, BDM.

⁵⁵⁰ Probates, BBAE 1570, 517/41, ANZ-A.

out'.⁵⁵¹ He led a busy life, with wide interests, sometimes involved in scientific research for potential profit but more often out of genuine curiosity.

Appendix

Figure 1: 'Analyst Pond (Snap Shots with out "Kodak")', *Observer*, 19 May 1894, p. 3.

Figure 2: 'Blo' [William Blomfield], 'Every Man to His Own Trade. – A Battle of Experts.

ANALYST POND: I am an expert, sir, and have analysed the Takapuna water. It contains only 0.0123 per cent of saline matter.

PETER OLIPHANT: You may be an expert on saline matter, but allow me to tell you your percentage is ridiculous. I'm an expert on that, and 10 per cent is a very fair rate'.

(*Observer*, 7 April 1900, p. 5.)

Figure 3: 'Blo', 'SOMEBODY WORDED THE COW THAT THE INSPECTOR WAS WATCHING.

Analyst Pond: Now, that's really strange. Out of about twenty catch samples of milk from off the milk rounds I find but one that is really bad. Is it the drought, or early information?' (*Observer*, 29 April 1905, p. 17.

Figure 4: 'Blo', 'SUFFERING FOR HIS COUNTRY'S GOOD.

The Government Analyst, Mr Pond, has been sampling the various whiskies sold, and has found some very bad indeed.

Government Analyst: Pooh! This would poison a Pond'. (*Observer*), 13 July 1907, p. 17.

⁵⁵¹ *Observer*, 23 October 1880, p. 43.

SNAP
SHOTS
WITH OUR
KODAK



Analyst Pond.

Figure 1: 'Analyst Pond (Snap Shots with out "Kodak")', Observer, 19 May 1894, p. 3.



Every Man to His Own Trade.—A Battle of Experts.

ANALYST POND: I am an expert, sir, and have analysed the Takapuna water. It contains only 0.0124 per cent. of saline matter.

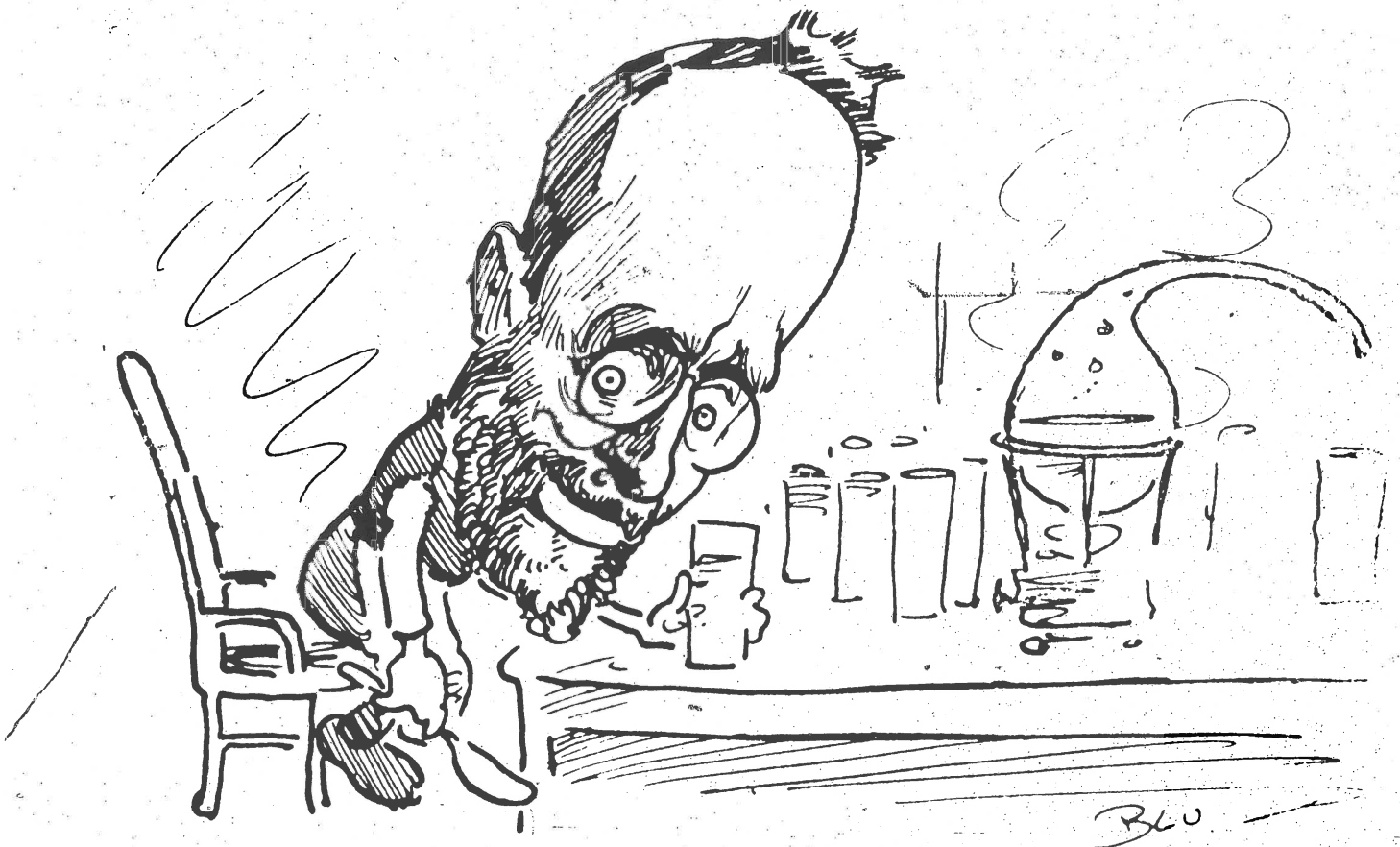
PETER OLIPHANT: You may be an expert on saline matter, but allow me to tell you your per centage is ridiculous. I'm an expert on that, and 10 per cent. is a very fair rate.

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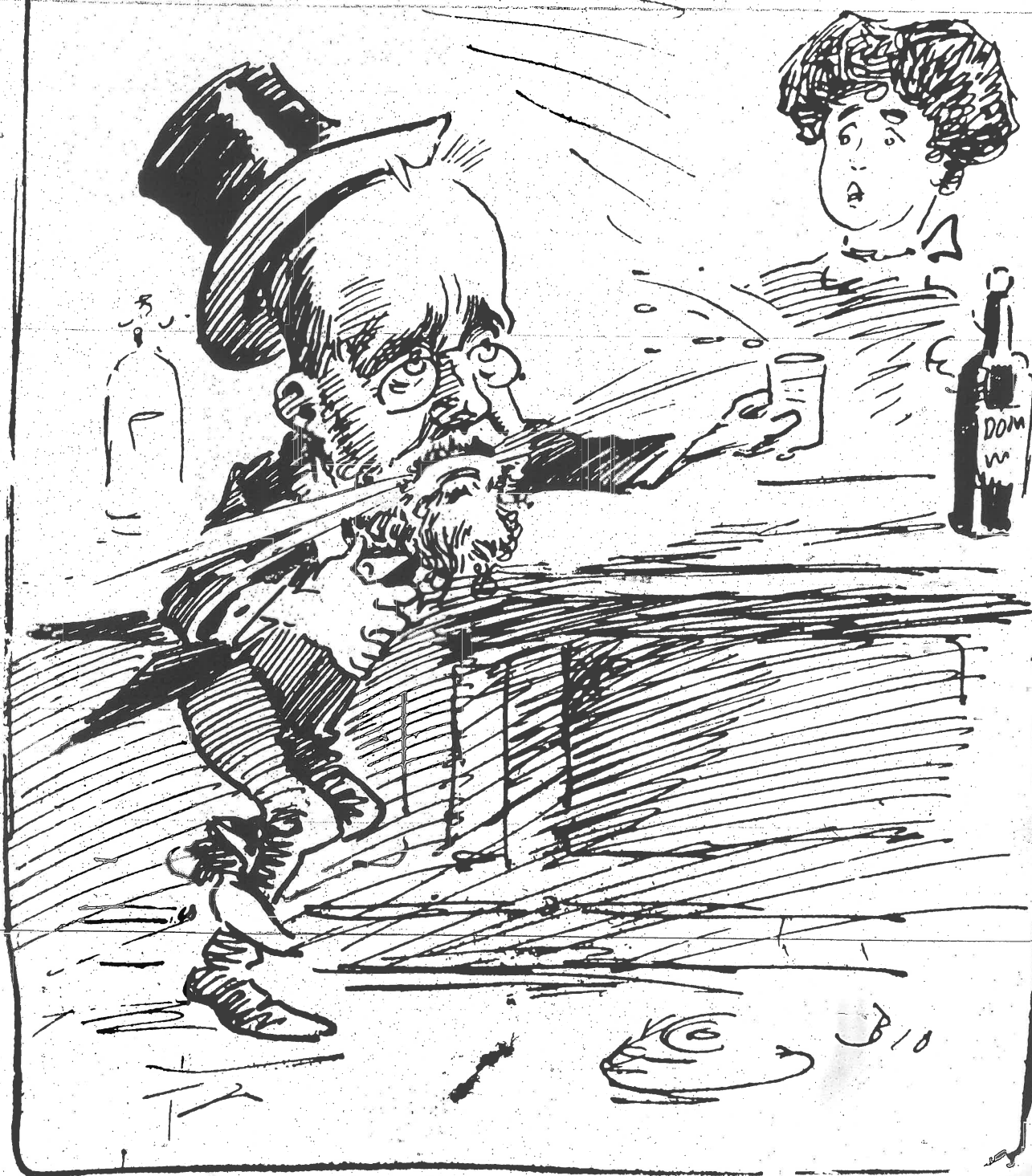


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