

# HARDY'S MINES LTD, OF WAIORONGOMAI

Philip Hart

**Te Aroha Mining District Working Papers**

**No. 100**

**Revised 31 October, 2025**

Historical Research Unit  
Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences  
The University of Waikato  
Private Bag 3105  
Hamilton, New Zealand

ISSN: 2463-6266

© 2016 Philip Hart

Contact: [prhart1940@gmail.com](mailto:prhart1940@gmail.com)



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**WAIKATO**  
*Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato*

## HARDY'S MINES LTD, OF WAIORONGOMAI

**Abstract:** *Hardy's Mines Ltd was formed on 30 April 1904 to acquire all of Edwin Henry Hardy's mining properties. Because of his experience in this goldfield, Hardy was to supervise the work for the first three years of the company's existence. Details are provided of the directors and shareholders, who included experienced businessmen from many parts of New Zealand apart from Te Arohq and with little or no mining experience. Immediately upon its formation, the company first had to undertake a considerable amount of dead work and to improve its battery before it could extract and process any ore. Much prospecting and testing was done, but only a small amount of gold was treated. Nevertheless, hopes were high during 1904 and 1905, and concentrates were sent to Australia for testing.*

*Being under-capitalized, as was so common, increasingly the company struggled financially, and in 1906 most work ceased and the mines were protected because the ore was not more payable. In that year, Hardy ceased to be the supervisor. Explorations had proved that the lode below where he had extracted good ore previously was increasingly refractory and difficult to treat.*

*Once the company's initial capital was exhausted, further capital was sought. The company was reconstructed in 1907 but continued to be under-capitalized. It was hoped that a new low level, known as McLean's level after the company that drove it, would strike good ore below the existing Colonist workings, but this work took several years, and the hoped-for valuable ore was found not to exist. A new company formed in 1910 continued to extend this level and to test any reefs struck, all the while hoping to sell its property. Although mining had ceased, some income was received through treating old tailings with cyanide. When it was discovered that the mine manager had driven McLean's level in the wrong direction, work on it ceased, especially because assays revealed that earlier ones had been 'misleading'. The company abandoned its property in 1924.*

### FORMATION OF THE COMPANY

Hardy's Mines Ltd was registered on 30 April 1904. Its objects were the acquisition of the properties and mining rights belonging to 'Edwin Henry Hardy, gentleman',<sup>1</sup> under the terms of an agreement signed on 13 April between Hardy and Charles John Hutchinson, who was the trustee for the company. This agreement specified that the company was to have a nominal capital of £25,000 in 50,000 shares of ten shillings each. Hardy was to receive £13,000, £3,000 in cash and the remainder in

---

<sup>1</sup> See paper on his life.

20,000 fully paid-up shares, and he was to be employed for three years as both managing director and mine supervisor for a salary of £400 a year. To enable future sales, 14,000 shares were reserved. For his services in setting up the company, Hutchinson was to receive 4,000 of Hardy's paid-up shares and £2 10s per cent of the nominal value of all the original shares.<sup>2</sup> Under the articles of association, all shares were to be pooled for three years, during which time none could be sold except at the pooled price and by a method to be determined by the directors. No calls were to exceed one shilling per share nor could any be made more frequently than two months after the preceding call. All new shares were to be offered to existing shareholders in proportion to the numbers they held.<sup>3</sup>

### THE DIRECTORS AND SECRETARIES

The original directors were Hutchinson, Hardy, John Davies Ormond, George Seton Veitch Wenley, and Angus William Gordon. Later directors were Ernest Yates, Robert Donald Douglas McLean, Alexander Bulwer Campbell, Gerhard Hendrik Engels, and Lionel Augustus Abraham. The original secretary, later a director, was Frederick William Abbott; his successor as secretary was Henry David Abbott. Details of their careers are given below, apart from Hardy, whose life is covered in the paper on his life.

**Frederick William Abbott** was described in the *Cyclopedia of New Zealand* as a mine owner.<sup>4</sup> In the company's directors' reports he was referred to as 'Lt. Colonel Abbott, D.S.O.'<sup>5</sup> His military rank and decorations came from his two-and-a-half years serving in the Boer War, when he commanded both New Zealand and Australian troops.<sup>6</sup> He died in 1912 when about to take command of the Auckland military district.<sup>7</sup>

On 1 January 1904, he formed a partnership with Hutchinson as Hutchinson and Abbott, based in Auckland, to continue their existing careers as land agents and

---

<sup>2</sup> Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 165 no. 1028, ANZ-A.

<sup>3</sup> Hardy's Mines Ltd, Articles of Association, 1904, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 165 no. 1028, ANZ-A.

<sup>4</sup> *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*, vol. 2, p. 463.

<sup>5</sup> Hardy's Mines Ltd, Directors' Report for 1905, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 165 no. 1028, ANZ-A.

<sup>6</sup> Letter from Major F.W. Abbott, *Auckland Weekly News*, 29 May 1902, p. 38; *Observer*, 26 September 1908, p. 3, 8 June 1912, p. 16, 21 September 1912, p. 5; *New Zealand Herald*, 5 June 1912, p. 8.

<sup>7</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 14 March 1912, p. 19, 6 June 1912, p. 20.

forming ‘industrial companies’.<sup>8</sup> This firm floated Hardy’s Mines.<sup>9</sup> Abbott had become involved in mining when aged 28, as explained in the *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*:

He left England for Wellington in 1893, with the intention of becoming a sheep farmer, but the outbreak of the Westralian Goldfields lured him to Coolgardie. Owing to sickness he returned to New Zealand, and, on the revival of mining in the Hauraki Peninsula, visited Kuaotunu, Tairua, and Whangamata. At the latter place, in conjunction with Mr [Thomas] Withers, an old prospector,<sup>10</sup> he had the good fortune to discover a valuable reef, which he named the “Luck at Last Reef,” and obtained 500 acres for mining purposes. A large portion - about 294 acres - of the “Luck at Last” property was successfully floated in London, and a company was formed entitled “The Whangamata Proprietary Company, Ltd.” This mine bids fair to become of great value and may possibly rival the great Waihi Mine. Mr Abbott, being so well pleased with the prospects of the district, secured 200 acres more in the vicinity. He considers that Whangamata will become a great mining centre.... The district is greatly indebted to Mr Abbott for his pluck and perseverance in promoting mining interests, and he can justly claim to be considered one of the practical pioneers of mining at Whangamata. In 1897 he entered on a course of study to qualify himself, in a knowledge of theory and practice, as a mining engineer.<sup>11</sup>

Abbott’s expectations for mines in the Whangamata district were unrealistic, but sometimes profitable. He sold the Luck at Last properties to an English company, the Whangamata Proprietary, for £10,000 in cash and 65,000 paid up shares, and was appointed to its advisory board.<sup>12</sup> During the 1890s he mostly invested in mines in this district,<sup>13</sup> but after the turn of the century he ceased investing there.<sup>14</sup> In addition to Hardy’s Mines, he was a director of four other mining companies.<sup>15</sup> He also had

---

<sup>8</sup> Advertisement, *New Zealand Herald*, 27 January 1904, p. 8.

<sup>9</sup> *New Zealand Herald*, 14 April 1904, p. 6.

<sup>10</sup> Advertisements, *Thames Advertiser*, 1 November 1888, p. 3, 14 September 1892, p. 3, 30 September 1892, p. 2; *Observer*, 1 August 1896, p. 17, 22 August 1896, p. 20.

<sup>11</sup> *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*, vol. 2, pp. 463-464.

<sup>12</sup> Thames Warden’s Court, Thames Instruments 1897-1898, no. 72361, BACL 15182/2a, ANZ-A; *Thames Advertiser*, 30 April 1898, p. 4.

<sup>13</sup> For example, *New Zealand Gazette*, 13 August 1896, p. 1301, 10 September 1896, p. 1533; *Thames Advertiser*, 4 July 1896, p. 3, 22 July 1896, p. 3, 28 August 1896, p. 3, Warden’s Court, 2 October 1896, p. 4, Warden’s Court, 27 November 1896, p. 1.

<sup>14</sup> For example, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 180 no. 1099; box 201 no. 1204; box 203 no. 1215; box 203 no. 1217, ANZ-A.

<sup>15</sup> Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 117 no. 757; box 180 no. 1140; box 203 no. 1217; box 223 no. 1318, ANZ-A.

investments in land and timber companies,<sup>16</sup> and was a director of the Mutual Loan and Investment Society of Auckland, formed in 1904.<sup>17</sup>

The highest number of shares he held in Hardy's Mines was 362.<sup>18</sup> In 1908, he ceased to be the company's secretary and instead was a director until 1910, when he became a director of New Hardy's Mines Ltd.<sup>19</sup> In 1909 he became a director of Waiorongomai Main Reef Ltd, yet another abortive venture.<sup>20</sup>

When Abbott was elected a director, his successor as secretary was **Henry David Abbott** (no relation) who had been appointed as acting secretary in 1907.<sup>21</sup> In that year he gave his occupation as being an Auckland land agent, as he still did in 1925.<sup>22</sup> In 1903, and when he died in 1937 at the age of 82, his death certificate declared him to be a mining engineer.<sup>23</sup> In 1895, he announced himself as being involved in negotiations to float New Zealand properties in London.<sup>24</sup> Nothing came from this, but in 1896 and 1897 he acquired mines for speculative purposes, particularly at Ohui, north of Whangamata,<sup>25</sup> but lacked the capital needed to develop them. In March 1897, he applied to the manager of the Auckland branch of the Union Bank of Australia for an advance of £25 'for a few days', but a later memorandum by the manager recorded that he had been told he had 'no means. No advance without security'.<sup>26</sup> As a result of being unable to raise capital, his mining licenses at Ohui and elsewhere were cancelled in

---

<sup>16</sup> Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 149 no. 952; box 201 no. 1204, ANZ-A.

<sup>17</sup> Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 188 no. 1140, ANZ-A.

<sup>18</sup> Hardy's Mines Ltd, List of Shareholders as at 23 August 1909, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 165 no. 1028, ANZ-A.

<sup>19</sup> Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 165 no. 1028; box 252 no. 1466, ANZ-A.

<sup>20</sup> Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 236 no. 1382, ANZ-A.

<sup>21</sup> Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1907, 9/1907, BBAV 11289/19a, ANZ-A.

<sup>22</sup> Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Registrations 1907, 1085/1907, BCDG 11288/3a; Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 461 no. 2675, ANZ-A.

<sup>23</sup> Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 179 no. 1096, ANZ-A; Death Certificate of Henry David Abbott, 23 August 1937, 1937/14764, BDM.

<sup>24</sup> *New Zealand Mining Standard*, 19 November 1895, p. 3.

<sup>25</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 3 August 1896, p. 3, 4 August 1896, p. 3, 12 September 1896, p. 3, 14 September 1896, p. 3, Warden's Court, 19 February 1897, p. 4, Warden's Court, 5 March 1897, pp. 3-4, Warden's Court, 9 April 1897, p. 4.

<sup>26</sup> Union Bank of Australia, Auckland Branch, Manager's Minute Books 1896-1904, vol. 2, folio 84, 025, Archives of the Australia and New Zealand Bank, Wellington.

1897 and 1898 because rents were unpaid.<sup>27</sup> Attempts to force him to pay by taking out distress warrants were futile, for he had no assets to seize.<sup>28</sup> When secretary for Hardy's Mines he invested in a gold mine at Kuaotunu and a cinnabar mine at Karangahake,<sup>29</sup> neither of which brought great financial rewards. If the estate of £385 left by his widow in 1943 was any indication, he only ever earned a modest income.<sup>30</sup>

**Lionel Augustus Abraham**, a nephew of the first Anglican bishop of Wellington, had arrived in New Zealand to take up farming, but soon joined with his brother in one of the earliest agricultural firms in Palmerston North and then with Edward Noel Barraud<sup>31</sup> as the junior partner in Barraud and Abraham, seed merchants.<sup>32</sup> Despite a long and successful business career, when he died in 1939 he left an estate valued at only £3,183 16s 11d.<sup>33</sup> He did not have shares in any other mining companies.

**Alexander Bulwer Campbell** had a distinguished career as a solicitor, commencing in 1880. From 1902 onwards he was based in Napier, and on his death was described as one of Hawke's Bay's 'most prominent and respected citizens'.<sup>34</sup> He left a modest estate of £6,010 5s 2d.<sup>35</sup> Becoming a director of Hardy's Mines was his only involvement with mining apart from being a shareholder of a company working (unsuccessfully) at Terawhiti, near Wellington, in 1883.<sup>36</sup>

**Gerhard Hendrik Engels**, a Dutchman who was the pioneer settler of the Fitzherbert district near Palmerston North, owned the Mangore estate, a sheep station, adjoining the township of Shannon. In the 1890s he had been chairman of the Horowhenua County Council. He had had a 'short experience' of goldmining at

---

<sup>27</sup> Thames Warden's Court, Register of Licensed Holdings and Special Claims 1897, folios 7, 24, 61, 85, BACL 14355/5a; Paeroa Warden's Court, Register of Special Claims 1896-1897, folios 125, 186, 189, ZAAP 13294/2a, ANZ-A.

<sup>28</sup> For example, Thames Resident Magistrate's Court, Home Warrant Book 1881-1933, 125/1898, 163/1898, BACL 13741/1a, ANZ-A.

<sup>29</sup> Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 233 no. 1370; Thames Warden's Court, Applications 1911, 2/11, BACL 14350/62, ANZ-A.

<sup>30</sup> Probate of Ethel Mina Abbott, BBAE 1570, 1060/43, ANZ-A.

<sup>31</sup> A future shareholder in Hardy's Mines: see below.

<sup>32</sup> See *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*, vol. 1 (Wellington, 1897), pp. 1187-1188; *Manawatu Standard*, 18 November 1939, p. 10; David Charles Abraham, *Abraham and His Seed Forever: The life and times of Lionel Augustus Abraham and Constance Palgrave Abraham 1863-1942* (Marton, 2007).

<sup>33</sup> Probate of Lionel Augustus Abraham, AAOY 21078, R22979346, ANZ-W [online].

<sup>34</sup> *Hawke's Bay Herald-Tribune*, 25 October 1938, p 6; see also *New Zealand Herald*, 14 July 1897, p. 6.

<sup>35</sup> Probate, AAOW 22775, R23221159, ANZ-W [online].

<sup>36</sup> Advertisement, *New Zealand Times*, 23 August 1883, p. 3.

Hokitika in the mid-1860s.<sup>37</sup> When he died in 1928, he left an estate valued at £24,265 18s 5d.<sup>38</sup>

**Angus William Gordon** had worked in the Public Works Department and the Native Land Court, was town clerk of Onehunga from 1892 to 1894, and at the time he became a director of Hardy's Mines was secretary and manager of the Auckland Club. He held this post for ten years, ending in 1912, and during that time he was also mayor of Onehunga for one year, 1905-1906. From 1912 onwards, he was a stipendiary steward for the Racing Conference.<sup>39</sup> Apart from his involvement in Hardy's Mines, his other investments in Hauraki mines were confined to the years 1907 to 1911.<sup>40</sup> From 1907 to 1910, he was chairman of directors of Hardy's Mines, and became a director of New Hardy's Mines Ltd in 1910.<sup>41</sup> His shareholding hovered around the minimum level required of a director, at its highest being 237.<sup>42</sup> In 1909, he had shares in two other Waiorongomai companies, the Bendigo and the Waitawheta.<sup>43</sup> On his death in 1931 he left a modest estate, £999 7s 9d.<sup>44</sup>

**Charles John Hutchinson**, who became chairman of directors in 1904 and remained a director until 1908, was at that time an Auckland land agent and a partner in the firm of Hutchinson and Abbott.<sup>45</sup> In 1865, when aged 25,<sup>46</sup> he had come to prominence through a deed of bravery during the Taranaki War, which he described in an 1882 letter defending Te Wetere, otherwise Wetere Te Rerenga,<sup>47</sup> against the charge of having killed a missionary, John Whiteley:

---

<sup>37</sup> *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*, vol. 1, p. 1092.

<sup>38</sup> Probates, BBAE 1570, 258/28, ANZ-A.

<sup>39</sup> *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*, vol. 2, p. 240; *Auckland Weekly News*, 5 May 1899, p. 18; *New Zealand Herald*, 26 November 1931, p. 14.

<sup>40</sup> Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 2 no. 19; box 9 no. 56; box 214 no. 1275; box 220 no. 1304; box 229 no. 1348; box 233 no. 1371; box 233 no. 1368; box 242 no. 1421; box 243 no. 1426; box 245 no. 1437; box 250 no. 1461; box 260 no. 1502, ANZ-A.

<sup>41</sup> Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 165 no. 1028; box 252 no. 1466, ANZ-A.

<sup>42</sup> Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 165 no. 1028, ANZ-A.

<sup>43</sup> Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 226 no. 1332, 42/1314, ANZ-A.

<sup>44</sup> Probates, BBAE 1570, R9384294, ANZ-A [online].

<sup>45</sup> Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 165 no. 1028, ANZ-A; *New Zealand Herald*, 14 April 1904, p. 6, 12 July 1921, p. 8.

<sup>46</sup> Army Department, Nominal and Descriptive Roll Book, Taranaki Military Settlers, Regimental No. 36, ARM, ANZ-W; Death Certificate of Charles John Hutchinson, 10 July 1921, 1921/8466, BDM.

<sup>47</sup> See paper on William Morris Newsham.

When Ensign in the Taranaki Military Settlers, at White Cliffs ... I carried a proclamation from Sir George Grey, and delivered the same alone, and about two miles from camp, to an armed party of which Te Wetera was in command, and with whom we were then having daily skirmishes, and although one of his party asked permission to shoot me, Wetera refused to permit it, and treated me as an honorable enemy.

The only two other men known to have delivered such peace proclamations had been shot.<sup>48</sup> Hutchinson later wrote of his 'only protection being a white handkerchief as a flag of truce'.<sup>49</sup> After this incident, Hutchinson and Wetera Te Rerenga became friends.<sup>50</sup>

After this war, he was a founder of the kauri gum export trade.<sup>51</sup> At the same time, he was a shipping and general commission agent, selling land, houses, vessels, timber, and other produce.<sup>52</sup> In 1884, he erected his second large kauri gum store in Auckland.<sup>53</sup> In the following year he opened a store in Thames to buy gum.<sup>54</sup> 'Obadiah' described him in 1896 as being 'of known integrity and business capacity'.<sup>55</sup> In the following year, his bank described his firm as being comprised of 'steady trustworthy people, and though their means are not large, they make good profits'.<sup>56</sup>

In 1881 and 1882, and again in 1895 and 1896, he invested in several Hauraki mines.<sup>57</sup> Director of both a claim and a mining company at the Tiki field at Coromandel

---

<sup>48</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 26 August 1882, p. 7.

<sup>49</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 23 March 1889, p. 15; see also T.W. Gudgeon, *The Defenders of New Zealand* (Auckland, 1887), pp. 162, 165-166.

<sup>50</sup> *New Zealand Herald*, 3 April 1884, p. 6; *Auckland Weekly News*, 23 March 1889, p. 15.

<sup>51</sup> *New Zealand Herald*, 7 June 1893, p. 6, 12 July 1921, p. 8; *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*, vol. 2, p. 392.

<sup>52</sup> *Descriptive Handbook of the Waikato* (Hamilton, 1880), p. 89.

<sup>53</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 8 March 1884, p. 6; *Observer*, 12 September 1885, pp. 5, 11, 26 September 1885, pp. 13, 20; Bank of New Zealand, Auckland Branch, Register of Securities, p. 269, Bank of New Zealand Archives, Wellington.

<sup>54</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 30 October 1885, p. 2.

<sup>55</sup> 'Obadiah', 'Shares and Mining', *Observer*, 20 June 1896, p. 9.

<sup>56</sup> National Bank, Inspector's Report on Auckland Branch, 13 December 1897, National Bank Archives, Wellington.

<sup>57</sup> For example, Paeroa Warden's Court, Register of Special Claims 1895-1896, folio 42, ZAAP 13294/1b; Coromandel Warden's Court, Register of Licensed Holdings 1889-1896, folio 197, ZAAN 14057/1a; Thames Warden's Court, Coromandel Instruments 1896, no. 71426, AAAE 15180/10a, ANZ-A; *New Zealand Gazette*, 17 March 1881, p. 342, 21 April 1881, p. 445, 18 August 1881, p.

in 1881,<sup>58</sup> in 1895 he was a director of an English company, Anglo-New Zealand Mines Investment Co Ltd.<sup>59</sup> He attempted to float a Waihi mine in England in 1896,<sup>60</sup> and in the following year visited London to float several Hauraki mines,<sup>61</sup> but no success was recorded.

Hutchinson held 1,505 fully paid-up shares in Hardy's Mines in May 1904 but had sold all but 85 of these by the end of the following May. Subsequently he purchased more, holding 2,350 in May 1906 and retaining these a year later.<sup>62</sup> In 1906, he went to London to seek more capital for the company.<sup>63</sup> In 1908, he received £263, a five per cent commission, for raising £5,260 through the sale of shares in the reconstructed company.<sup>64</sup> Between February and April 1908 he sold his remaining 588 shares.<sup>65</sup> Although he had no further association with this company, he did not cease to be interested in mining there, floating Waiorongomai Mines Ltd in July that year to work Hardy's Bonanza and Majestic claims.<sup>66</sup> He was a director of this company, and after it collapsed took a leading role in forming its successor, the Waitawheta Gold Prospecting Company, but sold his shares within a fortnight of being allotted them.<sup>67</sup>

Hutchinson was Auckland's most prominent organizer of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals,<sup>68</sup> and was also involved, in a less active way, with

1088, 20 July 1882, p. 988, 3 October 1895, pp. 1573-1574, 1576, 31 October 1895, p. 1735, 27 August 1896, p. 1381.

<sup>58</sup> Company Files, BBAE 10286/7a, ANZ-A; *Thames Star*, 16 April 1881, p. 2.

<sup>59</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 20 June 1896, p. 16.

<sup>60</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 21 April 1896, p. 3.

<sup>61</sup> London Correspondent, *Auckland Weekly News*, 24 April 1897, p. 15.

<sup>62</sup> Hardy's Mines Ltd, List of Shareholders as at 15 May 1904, 1 May 1905, 29 May 1905, 14 May 1906, 29 May 1907, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 165 no. 1028, ANZ-A.

<sup>63</sup> Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1906, 23, 38/1906, BBAV 11289/18a; Mining Applications 1907, 9/1907, BBAV 11289/19a, ANZ-A.

<sup>64</sup> Hardy's Mines Ltd, Balance Sheet to 30 June 1908, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 165 no. 1028, ANZ-A.

<sup>65</sup> Hardy's Mines Ltd, List of Shareholders as at 5 February 1908, 16 April 1908, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 165 no. 1028, ANZ-A.

<sup>66</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 30 July 1908, p. 37.

<sup>67</sup> Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1910, 23/1910, BBAV 11289/20a; Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 158 no. 1006; box 222 no. 1314, ANZ-A; *Observer*, 7 May 1910, p. 20.

<sup>68</sup> *New Zealand Herald*, 19 December 1895, p. 3, 7 January 1896, p. 6, 12 July 1921, p. 8; *Thames Star*, 1 May 1901, p. 2; *Auckland Weekly News*, 19 April 1884, p. 22, 4 December 1886, p. 20; *Observer*, 18 May 1901, p. 6.

charitable assistance to humans.<sup>69</sup> Married at an early age, he had no children,<sup>70</sup> and his wife devoted herself to charitable work, mainly with the ‘fallen women’ of Auckland and Australia.<sup>71</sup>

**Robert Ronald Douglas McLean**, the son of Sir Donald McLean, inherited large areas of land and would acquire many more.<sup>72</sup> He prided himself that his Maraekakaho Station was ‘a model of what a station should be’, both in farming methods and in the care of his farm workers.<sup>73</sup> As well as being a member of local bodies, he was Member of Parliament for Napier from 1896 to 1899, and during the First World War and later worked hard in the interests of the British Empire, and was knighted shortly before his death.<sup>74</sup> An opponent of the Liberal Party, in 1898 he cited the New Zealand Exploration Company, which attempted to develop the Waiorongomai field during that decade,<sup>75</sup> as an example of mining capital being driven from the colony by the government’s policies.<sup>76</sup> His mining investments were not confined to one particular part of the country, for he invested in the Roaring Meg Sluicing and Hydraulic Power Company at Blackball Creek on the South Island’s West Coast in 1897,<sup>77</sup> in Minerals Limited, based in Hokitika, in 1904,<sup>78</sup> in prospecting for cinnabar, antimony, and silver near Taumarānui in 1927,<sup>79</sup> and in mining sulphur on White Island.<sup>80</sup> His initial shareholding in Hardy’s Mines was 2,000, but by September 1904 he held 5,860. He continued to buy and sell shares, and the last list of shareholdings, of November 1910,

---

<sup>69</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 3 January 1885, p. 15; *New Zealand Herald*, 19 December 1895, p. 3.

<sup>70</sup> Marriage Certificate of Charles John Hutchinson, 26 September 1866, 1866/6001; Death Certificate of Charles John Hutchinson, 10 July 1921, 1921/8466, BDM; *New Zealand Herald*, 12 July 1921, p. 8.

<sup>71</sup> For example, *Auckland Weekly News*, 5 July 1884, p. 19; *Thames Advertiser*, 17 December 1892, p. 2; *Observer*, 2 March 1889, pp. 3, 5, 21 March 1891, p. 9, 21 December 1901, p. 4, 21 November 1903, p. 5, 4 August 1906, p. 3; *New Zealand Herald*, 22 January 1904, p. 6.

<sup>72</sup> For example, *A Return of the Freeholders of New Zealand ...* (Wellington, 1884), p. Mc 52; *AJHR*, 1883, G-4, p. 7; *Auckland Weekly News*, 1 October 1892, p. 38; *Observer*, 17 April 1915, p. 5.

<sup>73</sup> *Observer*, 24 May 1913, p. 4, 18 April 1914, p. 5; *New Zealand Herald*, 8 February 1929, p. 14.

<sup>74</sup> *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*, vol. 6 (Christchurch, 1908), p. 320; *Observer*, 12 January 1927, p. 4; *New Zealand Herald*, 8 February 1929, p. 14; for summary of his career, see Graeme Hunt, *The Rich List: Wealth and enterprise in New Zealand 1820-2000* (Auckland, 2000), p. 73.

<sup>75</sup> See paper on this company.

<sup>76</sup> *New Zealand Herald*, 29 August 1898, p. 5.

<sup>77</sup> *New Zealand Gazette*, 21 October 1897, p. 1930.

<sup>78</sup> Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 179 no. 1096, ANZ-A.

<sup>79</sup> Mines Department, MD 1, 10/13/119, ANZ-W.

<sup>80</sup> Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 514 no. 3028, ANZ-A.

recorded him as having 1,238. He became a director in 1908.<sup>81</sup> He would leave an estate of approximately £700,000.<sup>82</sup>

**John Davies Ormond** was the youngest son and namesake of the last Superintendent of the Hawke's Bay Province, who was later a Legislative Councillor; his father was also a land shark who used dubious means to acquire Maori land in that province.<sup>83</sup> When his father died in 1917, he owned 35,000 acres and his estate was valued at almost £450,000.<sup>84</sup> When Ormond himself died in 1942 he was described as having been 'a marked success' as a large-scale farmer; he left an estate of £47,927 19s 6d.<sup>85</sup> He had also invested in a land company and a timber company operating to the north of Dargaville.<sup>86</sup>

All his mining investments were made in the early twentieth century.<sup>87</sup> He first invested in Waiorongomai in January 1903, when he was granted the Premier Special Quartz Claim.<sup>88</sup> Apart from Hardy's Mines the only company in which he was a director was Waihi Reefs Consolidated, in 1909.<sup>89</sup>

**George Seton Veitch Wenley**, a Napier merchant and land agent,<sup>90</sup> who in 1897 had purchased the Sheridan Gold Mining Company at Tapu,<sup>91</sup> his only other known

---

<sup>81</sup> Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 165 no. 1028, ANZ-A.

<sup>82</sup> *Observer*, 17 December 1936, p. 33.

<sup>83</sup> *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*, vol. 6, pp. 298-299; *Observer*, 18 June 1881, p. 438; 4 October 1890, p. 7, 13 October 1917, p. 4; 'Mercurio', 'Local Gossip', *Auckland Weekly News*, 14 November 1891, p. 7; Mary Boyd, 'John Davies Ormond', *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, vol. 1 (Wellington, 1990), pp. 324-325.

<sup>84</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 1 October 1892, p. 38; Wellington Probates, AAOW W3846, 1917/2412, ANZ-W [online].

<sup>85</sup> Probates, AAOW 22775, R23224416, ANZ-W [online]; *Central Hawke's Bay Press*, 7 December 1942, p. 3.

<sup>86</sup> Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 149 no. 952; box 299 no. 1692, ANZ-A.

<sup>87</sup> Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 190 no. 1155; box 208 no. 1240; box 228 no. 1342; box 247 no. 1445; box 249 no. 1463; box 251 no. 1456, ANZ-A.

<sup>88</sup> Te Aroha Warden's Court, Register of Mining Privileges 1903-1910, folio 1, BBAV 11500/1a, ANZ-A.

<sup>89</sup> Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 249 no. 1456, ANZ-A.

<sup>90</sup> For his being a land agent, see *Daily Telegraph* (Napier), 22 November 1911, p. 5.

<sup>91</sup> Return of Allotments of Shares in Hardy's Mines Ltd, 15 May 1904, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 165 no. 1028, ANZ-A; *New Zealand Herald*, 21 July 1897, p. 6.

mining venture, was a very prominent member of his community.<sup>92</sup> When he died, in 1955, he left an estate valued at under £14,000.<sup>93</sup>

In 1883, **Ernest Yates** opened the first New Zealand branch of Arthur Yates and Company, a leading firm of seed merchants which was also involved with land settlement and afforestation (Arthur was his brother).<sup>94</sup> A wealthy man, he had investments in other mining companies in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.<sup>95</sup> On his death he left an estate of £38,844 15s 6d.<sup>96</sup>

All these directors and secretaries were prominent in and often beyond their local communities but had little knowledge of mining. Consequently, they relied on the abilities of Hardy and their mine managers to make the company a success – and, of course, on the value of the ore.

## SHAREHOLDINGS

On 15 May 1904, 15,860 shares were allotted. Shareholders paid six shillings of the nominal value of ten shillings upon allotment, the remainder to be called up as required; this initial working capital of £7,925 was far too small to fund the extensive developments required. All 21 members of the syndicate whose property was sold to the company received paid-up shares; only two had purchased contributing shares by that date. Most received only a small number of paid-up shares. The largest number, 15,950, went to Hardy, Hutchinson received 1,705, and Harriet Palmer, a shopkeeper of Auckland, of whom nothing has been traced, received 500, as did Campbell, the later director. The company's secretary received 100, and one of the directors, Yates, received 50 but purchased 450 contributing shares in addition. The largest batch of the remaining paid-up shares, 300, went to a member of Henry Hopper Adams' syndicate, Joseph James Craig, a prominent Auckland businessman.<sup>97</sup> Two Palmerston North land agents each had 70 shares, and a New Plymouth land agent had 20. A Wellington shareholder had 50, and two Auckland reporters received 25 each. Two gentlewomen, one of Scotland and the other of Auckland, had 250 and 45 respectively, and the latter's

---

<sup>92</sup> Papers Past provides a massive amount of information about his career.

<sup>93</sup> Probates, AAOW 22775, R23228493, ANZ-W [online].

<sup>94</sup> *New Zealand Herald*, 27 June 1947, p. 8; *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*, vol. 2, pp. 400-401.

<sup>95</sup> For examples of his mining investments, see Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 203 no. 1219, box 250 no. 1461, ANZ-A; for his finances, see Bank of New Zealand, Auckland Branch, Manager's Diary 1903-1905, pp. 16, 214-215; Manager's Diary 1905-1907, pp. 18, 84-85, 177; Manager's Diary 1907-1911, pp. 273, 367, 374, Bank of New Zealand Archives, Wellington;

<sup>96</sup> Probates, BBAE 1570, R9389424, ANZ-A [online].

<sup>97</sup> See paper on Henry Hopper Adams.

husband purchased 250. A Whanganui solicitor received 20 and bought an additional 100, a Napier banker received 100 and bought 100, and a New Plymouth brewer received 30 and purchased 300.

Their occupations and places of residence were similar to the shareholders who had purchased contributing shares. Of the current and future directors, Abraham bought 200, Gordon 100, Wenley 500, McLean and Ormond 1,000 each, and Engels 200. The remaining shares went to seven sheep farmers: four living in Hawkes Bay, and one each at Bulls, Kaingaroa Moewhango, and Halcombe. Of the four solicitors, two lived at Napier, and one each in Auckland and Wellington. The three farmers (the type of farming unspecified) had properties at Whanganui, Ashhurst, and Hastings. The three merchants lived at Wellington, Palmerston North, and Hawkes Bay, and of the three accountants, two lived in Wellington and one in Hawkes Bay. Of the two 'gentlemen', meaning that they did not need to work for a living, one lived in Napier and the other in Palmerston North. Of the two bankers, one resided in Auckland and the other in Wellington. There were two commission agents, one in Palmerston North and the second in Napier, and two secretaries, one in Auckland, the other at Shaftesbury (upriver from Te Aroha). There was one each of the following occupations: auctioneer, tanner, insurance manager, doctor, surgeon, manufacturer, hotelkeeper, law clerk, journalist, settler, and one 'married lady'. Three of these lived in Wellington, both Auckland and Napier had two shareholders, and there was one each at Palmerston North, Hastings, Te Kopuru, Hawkes Bay, and Christchurch. While these occupations were typical of many mining speculators, there was a notable omission: any miners. The only shareholders living in the Hauraki district were Hardy and the Shaftesbury secretary.<sup>98</sup> The 'knowing' Elliot brothers, who in December 1903 had taken Auckland investors to view the property,<sup>99</sup> had neither been given nor had purchased any shares.

By 16 November 1904, another 3,225 shares, gifted to the company by Hardy, had been allotted.<sup>100</sup> Eleven existing shareholders had purchased more shares, and one brewer, one gentleman, one gentlewoman, and two merchants had bought the remainder.<sup>101</sup> (One of the merchants was Abraham's business partner, Edward Noel Barraud. He was the founder and senior partner in this Palmerston North firm and had

---

<sup>98</sup> Return of Allotment of Shares in Hardy's Mines Ltd, 15 May 1904, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 165 no. 1028, ANZ-A.

<sup>99</sup> *Observer*, 5 December 1903, p. 20.

<sup>100</sup> Hardy's Mines Ltd, Directors' Report, 3 April 1905, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 165 no. 1028, ANZ-A.

<sup>101</sup> Return of Allotment of Shares in Hardy's Mines Ltd, 16 November 1904, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 165 no. 1028, ANZ-A.

also been an accountant and managing clerk for other merchants.<sup>102</sup> A noted artist in his day, his paintings are still saleable.<sup>103</sup> On his death in 1920, he left an estate estimated to be under £17,500.<sup>104</sup>) Two of these new shareholders lived in Auckland, two in Palmerston North, and one at New Plymouth. All but three paid the full value, ten shillings, per share; one paid two shillings and the other two paid one shilling.<sup>105</sup> Notably, nobody living in the Te Aroha district, apart from the Shaftesbury secretary, acquired any shares, nor did anyone in the wider Hauraki district.

### THE FIRST YEAR OF OPERATIONS

As all 16,000 shares offered to the public were subscribed, it was intended to spend £5,000 on developing the mine and enlarging the battery. The 14,000 reserved shares would ‘then be offered to shareholders at par, and the proceeds used for still further development’.<sup>106</sup> When the company was formed, the mine was protected, Hardy having convinced the warden, Robert Smelt Bush, that ‘a large amount of dead work’ was required before he could extract any quartz.<sup>107</sup> James Coutts, the mining inspector, noted that Hardy wanted a dangerous portion of the tramway repaired before he brought down any more ore. It was expected that the company would have more than the average of 12 men that Hardy had employed.<sup>108</sup>

The directors’ report of 31 May 1904 gave details of the work done so far:

The Piako Council and the Government are co-operating with the company in an endeavour to help forward work at the mines, and to that end are spending £150 upon improvements to the tunnels and tramline. The water-race is being enlarged, and other work is in hand to ensure a larger water supply than formerly. With fine weather, the work would be completed in a month. Preparations are well in hand for extension to the battery. In the Premier mine, at the south end of the Premier workings, the reef is being broken out 4ft wide in continuation of Mr Hardy’s stopes and shows gold in the dish at every examination. Between the extreme ends of the lode in the

---

<sup>102</sup> *Evening Post*, 4 September 1920, p. 6; *Dominion*, 6 September 1920, p. 4.

<sup>103</sup> ENB, Australian and New Zealand Art Sales Digest [online]; E. Noel Barraud, Find New Zealand Artists: A database of artist names [online].

<sup>104</sup> Probates, AAOM 6029, R23085851, ANZ-W [online].

<sup>105</sup> Return of Allotment of Shares in Hardy’s Mines Ltd, 16 November 1904, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 165 no. 1028, ANZ-A.

<sup>106</sup> *New Zealand Herald*, 14 April 1904, p. 6.

<sup>107</sup> Peter Gilchrist to Minister of Mines, 16 March 1904, Mines Department, MD 1, 07/1014, ANZ-W.

<sup>108</sup> James Coutts to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 8 April 1904, Mines Department, MD 1, 07/1014, ANZ-W.

Premier section (a distance of 435ft) gold has been continuously followed, and everything points to an extension of the same. The ore from the different portions being worked will be mixed, and the average, owing to low costs of breaking and crushing by water power, should show a fair margin of profit. The ore cannot be picked and selected as in the Thames and Coromandel mines; all must be sent to the battery, as the gold is distributed throughout the whole body of the ore. About 200 tons of quartz have been broken out in addition to development work and building of passes, tramways, ladderways, etc.<sup>109</sup>

With a cash balance of only £314 11s 3d in hand, it was proposed to use capital raised through calls to open up the Premier, Colonist, and New Find mines to ensure a regular supply of ore.<sup>110</sup> On 19 August, the company sought six months' protection for all its claims apart from the Premier, where it was proving the value of its ore. Hardy informed Bush that, if this proved satisfactory, it would 'issue £7000 worth of shares to meet extra development expenses'. Then, in late September, this application was withdrawn, for unstated reasons.<sup>111</sup>

By early October the battery's 'many alterations and additions' had been completed.<sup>112</sup> It recommenced working on 10 October, by which date 35 men were developing 'various portions of the mines'. In addition to these men working for wages, four contracts for driving were let in that month, and by mid-October between £5,000 and £6,000 had been spent on the battery, the water race, and the mines. A 'large lode' was being driven on in the Sceptre Extended (probably in the former Big Blow) and 'good progress' was being made in the Premier. 'In the Colonist claim high-class concentrating ore is being got. Through this part of the property it is intended to approach and work the lode in the New Find section. As soon as possible a start will also be made to put through about 4000 tons of old tailings left by former owners'.<sup>113</sup> A visiting mining reporter was informed that the prospects were (as always) 'very promising', and in addition to working 'the known payable reefs' new ground would be opened up.<sup>114</sup>

Late in October, Hardy gave Gordon, along with two shareholders and a potential shareholder, a guided tour of the battery and mines. (As the details of his 'up-to-date and efficient plant' have been given in the paper on Hardy, they are not repeated here.)

---

<sup>109</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 9 June 1904, p. 41.

<sup>110</sup> *New Zealand Herald*, 15 June 1904, p. 6.

<sup>111</sup> Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1904, 39/1904, BBAV 11289/18a, ANZ-A.

<sup>112</sup> *Thames Star*, 7 October 1904, p. 1.

<sup>113</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 20 October 1904, p. 40.

<sup>114</sup> *Thames Star*, 7 October 1904, p. 1.

They first inspected the low level of the Colonist section. Here the Hero reef, which is over 9ft wide, is being worked northwards for the whole width of the drive (4ft 6in). Extra men will be put on to drive south on the lode shortly, when better ventilation has been provided. In that direction the lode has a width of 12ft. In the north end it is producing first-class concentrating ore. The visitors all brought away samples broken out for them. About 68 tons of ore from this section have been paddocked awaiting conveyance to the battery.... From here the party went on to the Premier section, where they found driving in progress at two upper levels northwards along the hanging wall of the lode. Ore of good grade was in view, which on breaking down gave good loose prospects. The reef was being cross-cutted in places, and a rise was also in progress to the level above. The next portion of the property visited was the Canadian level of the New Find section. Here the old tunnel was being cleaned out and retimbered preparatory to further operations. In the Sceptre Extended section, the visitors found work going on in a drive where the reef is shortly to be worked on, a little ore being taken out in the meantime. The members of the party were struck with the abundance of the water supply for use in working the mines and also with the plentiful supply of timber on the property. Altogether there are 35 men now employed at the mines and battery, and this number will shortly be increased.<sup>115</sup>

In an appendix to a 1955 report written by Hardy's son Malcolm for a mining company,<sup>116</sup> he cited his father's assay books (now lost) for 1904 and 1905, which revealed the amount of gold and silver revealed by the assays but not their values. In the Cadman, two samples were taken from the Gold King reef from the paddock and four more from the 'long drive', and 16 more came from various portions of the Silver King lode. Ten samples came from the Gold King reef within the boundaries of the former Waitoki mine, and two from this reef in the former Werahiko. From the Welcome lode in the Loyalty ground, 21 samples were taken from several levels as well as from the surface. Nine came from the Vulcan reef, three from the Army reef, seven from various levels in the Colonist, eight from several levels in the Premier, and five from the New Find reef.<sup>117</sup>

In February 1905, Coutts gave a detailed report on the work done to that date:

---

<sup>115</sup> *New Zealand Herald*, 22 October 1904, p. 6.

<sup>116</sup> See paper on his life.

<sup>117</sup> Malcolm Hardy, Report for South Pacific Mines, 27 October 1955, Appendix, pp. 1-4; for the dating of this report, see Alistair Isdale to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 20 November 1962, in the files of the Inspector of Mines, Huntly, Box 16A, 13/11, vol. 1, now held by Ministry of Commerce, Hamilton. This report has been lost, but Eric Coppard of Waihi made a handwritten copy: Coppard Papers.

The work since completed has been the doubling of the capacity of the water-race, retimbering and enlarging five tunnels,<sup>118</sup> cutting of various watercourses, erection of trestles and fluming and building new dam and sluice-gate. The battery has been extensively enlarged and improved. The work comprises a tram-line from battery store-room to county tramway, a commodious store-room, circular-saw house, four sets of grizzlies, one rock-breaker, two 50-ton hoppers, four automatic Challenge ore-feeders, twenty stamps of 800lb each, four electro-copper silver plates each 6ft by 5ft, four Watson-Denny grinding and amalgamating continuous-discharge pans, eight Union Gwynne Head 6ft vanners, two Wilfley tables, six berdans, sluice-tables, electric-light dynamo, lathe, and drilling-machines. Three Pelton wheels drive stamps and pans, rock-breaker, and vanners, under a head of 240ft of water. The plant is capable of closely saving the values of the ores of this district, and has been specially constructed to save all minerals by concentration preparatory to smelting at Dapto, New South Wales.<sup>119</sup> Operations at the mines are entirely confined to the opening-up of the reef in the lowest level, from which it is intended to connect with the various sections of the company's property. The lode at present being worked is about 15ft wide, but the drive is confined to about 5ft, from which large masses of heavily mineralised ore containing gold, silver, lead, copper, and zinc are being extracted. By selecting the better portions from the battery ore-feeders, ore worth by assay over £12 per ton can be easily obtained, but it is intended, after due trials, to save handling by rough grading at the mine. The battery treatment is purely mechanical and, so far, has proved to be well able to save a high percentage of concentrates' values. Formerly heavy penalties were imposed by smelters on ores carrying zinc, but at present no penalty attaches to zinc up to 10 per cent. Above that, 1s per unit percentage is charged, against which is credited the value of the copper and lead contents, on a most reasonable scale. In order to facilitate the mine-work, a line of piping 1,500ft long, giving a fall of over 300ft with a 6in pipe is being laid down. Meantime a fall of 85ft works two small fans and a quartz-hoisting winch designed by the supervisor. The county tramway has been leased for five years. During the coming year work will be vigorously carried on, both in driving and on the reef, in preparation for the more expeditious method of extracting the ore by stoping. The preliminary work in mining is always tedious, but any curtailment of what is warranted by the excellent appearance of the mine to-day will only lead to confusion and the sacrifice of the best interests of the mine. During the year twenty-eight men have been employed.<sup>120</sup>

Bush clarified some of this account by explaining that, on the water race, 'earth-courses have been replaced by fluming, and trestling has been strengthened'. Piping had

---

<sup>118</sup> Printed as 'lining fire-tunnels', which was a meaningless misreading of the report: correct spelling in R.S. Bush to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 5 May 1905, *AJHR*, 1905, C-3, p. 86.

<sup>119</sup> This smelter was 56 miles south of Sydney: Geoffrey Blainey, *The Rush That Never Ended: A history of Australian Mining* (Melbourne, 1964), p. 278.

<sup>120</sup> James Coutts to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 18 February 1905, *AJHR*, 1905, C-3, p. 36.

been laid in the low level of the Colonist to utilize waterpower for ‘rock-drills, ventilating, forge-fans, and hoisting-machine’, the latter being needed to raise ore to the tramway level. In the Premier, ‘a considerable amount of driving and rising’ had been done, and the lowest level in the company’s ground, in the Colonist, had been extended

and the reefs therein driven upon. The stone in this level, as well as in the upper level, is opening up well, and a large supply of ore is stacked for treatment. A trial has been made of the surface ore in the Premier outcrop (taken for a width of 20ft), 250 tons of stone having produced two hundred and thirty pounds’ worth of bullion and fifty pounds’ worth of concentrates. Further work will be done later on when conditions for milling and transport are more favourable: in the meantime, all available money is being expended upon the lowest level, where a large block of sulphide-ore has been discovered. A noticeable feature is its greater richness as the workings get deeper. The upper levels show four parts of silver to one of gold in the concentrates, whereas the low level shows two and a half parts of silver to one of gold. With the percentage of copper, it is claimed that the assay value of this bullion is £29 per ton. The next crushing will prove the value of the ore from both the upper and lower levels and have an important bearing upon the future operations. At present the outlook is exceedingly good. A sum of £9,000 has been spent in labour and material.<sup>121</sup>

The Mines Department’s inspecting engineer, John Hayes, agreed that the company had done a ‘considerable amount of new work’ in both mine and battery.

As a matter of course, these new works and the reorganization of previously existing arrangements practically stopped the ordinary work of the mine and battery, hence this concern does not show more than a mere nominal production for the year; but as everything was getting into good working-order on the occasion of my last visit to the property, an increased tonnage and yield of bullion may be expected this year.<sup>122</sup>

Other developments were planned; for example, early in 1905 the right was granted for another water race to drive a dynamo to provide more electricity for the battery.<sup>123</sup> As noted by Coutts, the company had leased the tramway for five years after promising to spend about £320 in repairing the line and keeping it in repair, in return

---

<sup>121</sup> R.S. Bush to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 5 May 1905, *AJHR*, 1905, C-3, p. 86.

<sup>122</sup> John Hayes (Inspecting Engineer) to Minister of Mines, 22 May 1905, *AJHR*, 1905, C-3, p. 5.

<sup>123</sup> Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Mining Applications 1905, 15/1905, BBAV 11289/18a, ANZ-A; Plan of Water Race and Pipe Line for Hardy’s Mines Ltd Waiorongomai, n.d. [8 May 1905], Te Aroha and District Museum.

for paying a nominal annual rent of £1.<sup>124</sup> After spending this sum in 1905, it was complimented by the council for its repairs.<sup>125</sup> The company anticipated that by controlling the line it would be able to keep up a regular supply of ore,<sup>126</sup> which would be vital, as by then it had spent £9,669 15s 9d, mostly on dead work in the mines, battery, and water race.<sup>127</sup> These necessary improvements had meant that, for a ‘considerable portion’ of its first year of operations, no ore had been produced.<sup>128</sup>

By 31 December 1904, 483 tons had been crushed for a return of 281oz 5dwt, valued at £665 10s 3d.<sup>129</sup> At the beginning of 1905, in the first clean-up of the battery since the company’s registration, 101 ounces of bullion were obtained, valued at £267.<sup>130</sup> In February 1905, a trial crushing of

177 tons produced 22 1/2 tons of concentrates, valued at about £571 17s 4d. The ore crushed came from the lowest level in the property, in the Premier special section, and from the drives in course of extension for the working of the lode. The latter is being treated for a width of about 5ft. When the necessary rises are completed a very large body of ore will be available for crushing.<sup>131</sup>

After costs of mining and treatment had been deducted, the bullion account as at 31 March was a mere £149 4s 11d, but unsold concentrates were valued at £800.<sup>132</sup> Almost immediately afterwards, Hardy reported ‘crushing from March 6 to March 25 [of] 160 tons of surface ore only, for bullion valued at £343 7s 8d. This makes the total value won to date in gold and concentrates £1182’. Because of ‘the exceptional scarcity

---

<sup>124</sup> Piako County Council, Minutes of Meetings of 23 November 1904, 21 December 1904, 18 January 1905; Lease and Bond, signed on 23 January 1905 and 6 February 1905, Matamata-Piako District Council Archives, Te Aroha.

<sup>125</sup> W.P. Chepmell to Secretary, Hardy’s Mines, 16 September 1905; County Clerk to Secretary, Hardy’s Mines, 25 September 1905, Piako County Council, Letterbook 1905-1906, pp. 149, 238, Matamata-Piako District Council Archives, Te Aroha.

<sup>126</sup> *New Zealand Mines Record*, 16 January 1905, p. 230.

<sup>127</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 12 January 1905, p. 25.

<sup>128</sup> *AJHR*, 1905, C-2, p. 3.

<sup>129</sup> *AJHR*, 1905, C-3, p. 132.

<sup>130</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 12 January 1905, p. 25.

<sup>131</sup> *New Zealand Herald*, 2 March 1905, p. 3.

<sup>132</sup> Hardy’s Mines Ltd, Balance Sheet, 31 March 1905, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 165 no. 1028, ANZ-A.

of water' over summer, only ten stamps had been used, but once the dry weather ended there was 'sufficient good ore in hand to keep the whole 20 stamps running'.<sup>133</sup>

On 31 March 1905, the manager of the Bank of New Zealand's Paeroa branch recorded that the company was now producing gold, 'though not yet on a large scale', as 'a good deal of development work' was being done.<sup>134</sup> On the same date, writing as supervisor but no longer as the managing director, Hardy's report to the directors emphasized the improvements made to the battery, which was

capable of high-class work. The quantity of sulphides met with as the mine work advanced fully justified the erection of the eight vanners imported from America; indeed, so great is the quantity (over 10% of the ore mined) that four more vanners could with advantage be added. Everything about the battery is automatic, thus reducing the cost of working to an extremely low point.

The opening up of the mines had

been vigorously prosecuted. Drives and ventilating shafts have been opened up ready for the more economical method of ore extraction by stoping, and the quartz obtained by this means has been treated at the battery with very satisfactory results. When the foundation work of the mine has been fully completed it will be possible to extract a very large quantity of ore.

It was 'very satisfactory' that the quartz from the lowest level, the 1400-foot level in the Colonist, was 'the best yet obtained', the proportion of gold being 1 to 2 1/2 compared with 1 to 4 in the upper levels. He 'believed that under the vast accumulation of sulphides which the reef discloses there may be met a rich gold deposit such as has been found in other localities'. The sulphides that had been concentrated at the battery were worth 'about £24 per ton, which is a very satisfactory and highly payable figure'. He wanted to erect a roasting furnace and chlorination plant, which would be much more economical than sending these sulphides to Australia for smelting. As an indication that costs were foremost in his mind, he explained that the waterpower being tapped would 'do all hoisting, ventilating, and rock drilling at an extremely low price'. The prospects (once again) were 'most hopeful', with a 'large quantity of easily broken ore' in sight:

Results of trial crushings fully established the many claims made on behalf of this property, and nothing remains now but to provide the necessary

---

<sup>133</sup> *New Zealand Herald*, 3 April 1905, p. 3.

<sup>134</sup> Bank of New Zealand, Paeroa Branch, Half-Yearly Balance Book, 31 March 1905: Bullion, Bank of New Zealand Archives, Wellington.

capital for those further extensions not contemplated before the mine showed such an abundance of sulphide ore, which are plainly essential to the further economical working of the property.<sup>135</sup>

Hardy was emphasizing that his earlier claims about the value of his mines had been proven correct, but that still more capital must be spent before any large returns could be expected. At the subsequent annual meeting of shareholders, held on 1 May, he expanded on this report:

The reef was opening up very well, being now from 18ft to 20ft in width. They were not rejecting any ore. The canvas tables had saved stuff that assayed £120 6s per ton, of which 28oz 14dwt was gold, and 42oz silver. He hoped with roasting and chlorination to treat the concentrates with their own plant. The process of roasting and chlorination to be adopted was not at all new, but advances had been made recently whereby mechanical rubbing of the ore had been substituted for handwork. This enabled one man to superintend five or six furnaces, and thus reduced the cost of labour, etc, to a very small figure. Chlorination could be carried on cheaply in this district, as the price of sulphuric acid and hypochlorite of lime was as low as in many parts of America, where a similar process was in operation, and the cost of labour was much higher.

He would travel to Sydney and Melbourne in the middle of this month 'to make full investigation of the working of the latest roasting and chlorinating plant' to enable him to recommend 'the purchase of a complete plant'.<sup>136</sup>

The directors' report to this meeting regretted that no dividend had been paid, 'as at one time they hoped to do' but stated that the developments had 'brought us within immediate touch of payable operations'. To hasten the latter, they had 'unhesitatingly and drastically written off all outlay which had ceased to be of productive value'. They admitted that only by Hardy gifting 5,000 of his shares to be sold had the accounts balanced. 'Our battery and plant, together with rock-drill, and the first cost of the tramline, have exceeded the original estimates, but we have now one of the most complete plants in New Zealand', which they intended to operate at its maximum capacity of 480 tons monthly during the coming year 'as far as possible'.

Our main requirement at the present is development. It is all-important to establish the stability of the property, and to assure a supply of ore ahead of what the battery can deal with. This ought to be our very first undertaking, but this can of course be carried on simultaneously with keeping the battery supplied to the fullest extent of its power. When we have thus assured say

---

<sup>135</sup> E.H. Hardy, Supervisor's Report, 31 March 1905, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 165 no. 1028, ANZ-A.

<sup>136</sup> *New Zealand Herald*, 2 May 1905, p. 3.

from six to twelve months' supplies of ore ahead of present battery power, it will then be time to consider - what we will then have to consider - the extension of crushing plant and additional water power. To meet this very important work the Directors have decided to issue at once the whole of our Reserve Shares to Shareholders at par and *pro rata*, but to call up only so much as is required from time to time, say 2d 6d on application, 2s 6d on 30th June, and the balance if required at intervals of not less than two months.<sup>137</sup>

In moving the adoption of the report and balance sheet, Hutchinson said that

the finances were really better than the balance-sheet showed, as the company had already received £536 for concentrates, and the balance was at the smelter. This, with the gift of shares from Mr Hardy, made the finances £1300 better than was shown. In addition, £1600 had been written off in depreciation, which might fairly have been spread over several years. The directors had spent £3870 upon the plant and machinery, and £2698 upon mine development. Of the reserve shares, all but 1810 had been sold.<sup>138</sup>

'Obadiah' commented that this report 'was chiefly explanations as to why the company has not crushed the millions of tons of ore that are in sight. The management propose to keep it till next year. This is a mistaken policy. The price of gold may go down'.<sup>139</sup> That the shareholders and directors had faith in their property was indicated by another 8,040 shares being allotted on 1 May: all were sold to 22 existing shareholders, including all the directors apart from Hutchinson, who received his 405 shares as fully paid-up; the others paid 2s 6d for their new shares.<sup>140</sup> By late May all but 385 reserved shares had been sold.<sup>141</sup> On 29 May, an allotment of another 825 shares was made to four existing shareholders, one of whom, Abraham, was a director, while Hutchinson received another 85 fully paid-up shares.<sup>142</sup>

#### A HOPEFUL OUTLOOK AT THE START OF THE SECOND YEAR OF OPERATIONS

---

<sup>137</sup> Hardy's Mines Ltd, Directors' Report, 3 April 1905, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 165 no. 1028, ANZ-A.

<sup>138</sup> *New Zealand Herald*, 2 May 1905, p. 3.

<sup>139</sup> 'Obadiah', 'Shares and Mining', *Observer*, 6 May 1905, p. 20.

<sup>140</sup> Hardy's Mines Ltd, Allotment of shares, 1 May 1905, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 165 no. 1028, ANZ-A.

<sup>141</sup> *New Zealand Herald*, 22 May 1905, p. 3.

<sup>142</sup> Hardy's Mines Ltd., Allotment of Shares, 29 May 1905, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 165 no. 1028, ANZ-A.

On 16 May 1905, the *Thames Star* wrote that ‘everything’ continued ‘to look more promising as time goes on’. The battery was ‘running 20 stamps night and day’, a large block of payable ore was being worked in the Colonist, and nearly 40 men were employed. About 50 tons of concentrates were being obtained every month, which ‘have proved of great value and pay handsomely’. As the Dapto works had closed, the concentrates were being treated at Newcastle, in New South Wales.<sup>143</sup>

In that month, Hardy took a parcel of concentrates to Australia for testing in Melbourne’s Melton furnace and chlorination plant:

Pending the result of this test, and the receipt of a report from Mr Hardy, it is the intention of the directors to store all the concentrates produced, and if the result and report be entirely satisfactory the board will continue to hold back the whole of the concentrates, to be treated on the spot by the company’s own plant when erected, as this would save the company a considerable amount of money.<sup>144</sup>

In July, 70 tons were sent to Melbourne for treatment.<sup>145</sup> Early in the following month, the *Te Aroha News* was informed that Hardy had had ‘a very successful visit to Sydney, with regard to the object with which he went, and that he holds very promising views for the future of the Waiorongomai battery’.<sup>146</sup>

From May to July, concentrates to the gross value of £1,963 were sent to Selby’s Smelting Works, San Francisco. By August, 26 men were employed at ‘ore-raising and mine-development’, 16 of them working in the Premier.<sup>147</sup> Almost immediately upon his return from Australia, Hardy was able to telegraph to the secretary: ‘General samples, north end of low level Colonist, value per ton £4 6s 8d and £5 4s 9d’.<sup>148</sup> Late in August, the battery had ‘been running for some time. Good ore continues to be brought down’, and it was ‘intended to vigorously prosecute the work, as the reefs are panning out very well’.<sup>149</sup> In mid-September, it was reported that new blocks in the Premier had been opened up since mid-June, and it was hoped ‘to resume continuous

---

<sup>143</sup> *Thames Star*, 16 May 1905, p. 1.

<sup>144</sup> *New Zealand Herald*, 22 May 1905, p. 3.

<sup>145</sup> *Thames Star*, 10 July 1905, p. 2.

<sup>146</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 12 August 1905, p. 2.

<sup>147</sup> *New Zealand Herald*, 2 August 1905, p. 3.

<sup>148</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 17 August 1905, p. 26.

<sup>149</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 22 August 1905, p. 2.

crushing early next month'; 171 tons had produced bullion valued at £380 15s 9d.<sup>150</sup> For the calendar year 1905, all the crushings produced a return of £3,379 0s 9d.<sup>151</sup>

### DECLINING FORTUNES

The company's financial state was revealed in its statement of affairs as at 31 December 1905. Although £24,832 10s-worth of shares had been subscribed, only £12,322 10s had been paid for in cash, the remainder having been given to Hardy and the other vendors. All their value had been called up on 20,000 shares, and 7s 6d on the remaining 9,115. £1,089 7s 6d was owed on a call made on 19 December. Since registration, 347 ounces of bullion had been produced with a gross value of £882 10s 7d, and 183 tons of concentrates had a gross value £3,581 14s 3d. This compared with total expenditure since the company's registration of £18,660 16s 7d, which included the £3,000 paid to Hardy. The company also owed £450.<sup>152</sup>

On 22 December, an application was made for six months' protection for all their mines. The secretary declared that the company had spent £17,500 during the past 18 months and was now negotiating to obtain English capital. 'Favourable reports have been made on the inducements offered by the Company's ground' and there was 'every probability of the necessary capital being secured'. In the meantime, insufficient capital prevented working the ground on a large scale or employing more than four men. The application was granted.<sup>153</sup>

Just before the end of the year, newspapers were told that a recent trial crushing of 32 tons extracted from the floor of the lowest Colonist drive had given a net return of £3 15s a ton, and that increased capital would be used to follow this run of ore downwards. In the Premier, the company was pushing ahead with No. 4 level to cut the 'lode which yielded good returns in the upper levels. During the first few months of 1906 the company will reduce the number of hands employed', a statement which slid over the drastic reduction of workers from 26 to four, 'and will again increase the workers as developments progress. The battery in the meantime will be closed down, except for crushing of small parcels'.<sup>154</sup>

James Coutts' March report clarified the reason for this sudden decline in the company's fortunes. By not mentioning any ore being extracted from the Premier, he

---

<sup>150</sup> *Thames Star*, 19 September 1905, p. 1; *New Zealand Herald*, 19 September 1905, p. 3.

<sup>151</sup> *New Zealand Mines Record*, 16 January 1906, p. 244.

<sup>152</sup> Hardy's Mines, Statement of Affairs, 31 December 1905, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 165 no. 1028, ANZ-A.

<sup>153</sup> Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1905, 40, 41/1905, BBAV 11289/18a, ANZ-A.

<sup>154</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 28 December 1905, p. 30.

indicated that this mine was no longer producing payable ore. Work in early 1906 had been concentrated on opening up the lode in the 1400-foot level in the Colonist, but as after 'a considerable amount' of prospecting had been done the ore had proved not to be

as valuable as anticipated, all work here was discontinued, and a number of the miners discharged. The few men who were retained were put on to try the blocks of ground over the No. 2 level in the Premier section. No new discoveries have been made, and as the ore won from the mine has not proved payable, the results are very disappointing to the shareholders who were induced to take an interest in the company.<sup>155</sup>

John Hayes wrote that, although there had been an average return of £3 13s 5 1/2d per ton, 'the general results' were 'not profitable when spread over the whole of the company's operations'.<sup>156</sup> The directors' report for the annual meeting held on 1 May 1906 continued this gloomy tale. It began by noting that, at the time of the previous annual report,

both the Board and the Supervisor believed the immediate prospects to be most hopeful, and immediate success then appeared assured, and there was at that time a demand for shares from outsiders which we could not satisfy without breaking the Articles [restricting sales to existing shareholders] ... Encouraged by that position, the Board opened up sufficient ground to have about two years' supply in sight, and were jubilant accordingly, when suddenly in June the ore went back on us in values. Mr Hardy was at that time in Australia, and on consulting him he advised us to sink a winze, but as our capital by that time had been much reduced we found it impossible to do this without exhausting our funds, and therefore considered it wiser to return to work on the Premier (which had also been recommended to us) because the gold there is freer and offered prospects of a prompt return which the winze on the sulphide ore did not. But at the same time, we complied with Mr Hardy's suggestion as far as our funds and the water permitted by taking up the floor of the lowest level for a result of 32 tons worth £3 net per ton of ore. At the first we obtained returns from the Premier of free gold worth £1 12s per ton of ore, and hoped for still better results to enable us later to proceed with the winze, but having reason to think there were heavy losses in extraction we had checks made by independent men which left us doubtful as to the saving capacity of the Battery.

Because of the heavy outlay in opening up these blocks of ore, on the advice of the two Napier directors a report was requested from Frederick Capel Brown, an American mining engineer and leading mine manager who was the general manager of

---

<sup>155</sup> James Coutts to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 31 March 1906, *AJHR*, 1906, C-3, p. 40.

<sup>156</sup> John Hayes to Minister of Mines, 21 May 1906, *AJHR*, 1906, C-3, p. 4.

the Komata Reefs mine, near Paeroa,<sup>157</sup> at a cost of £113 13s 7d.<sup>158</sup> As Brown had recommended spending £25,000 on further developing what he considered to be a valuable property, the directors agreed that Hutchinson should go to London, where, with the assistance of Abraham, he would seek to obtain this new capital. ‘Meanwhile, protection has been secured and everything possible done to cut down expenses to a minimum while waiting the results of the efforts of our representative in London, and with the call still to make the property can be held for a year or more’.<sup>159</sup> The last call was made nine days later, which meant that by then every share had been called up to its full value. £658 2s 6d still remained unpaid on 14 May, but could be expected to be paid, for all previous calls had, eventually, been paid.<sup>160</sup>

That Brown had been asked for a report must have reflected doubt in the directors’ minds about Hardy’s advice. By April 1906 he was no longer listed as being supervisor, and it is likely that, insulted by the directors’ seeking a second opinion, he had resigned; there was no indication that the directors had dismissed him.

#### BROWN’S REPORT

Brown’s report was dated 1 March 1906. After summarizing the local geology and its mining history, he mentioned the general understanding that mines throughout the peninsula did not live down: ‘in several places good surface indications had “bottomed” on barren rock’. Yet at Karangahake it had been found that the latter was only a poor zone, under which even better ore was struck. ‘An examination of the workings, and especially of the low levels, of the New Find, Colonist, and Premier sections’, showed ‘conclusively that the rich runs of ore have become shortened and pinched up in hard rock’. Hardy had obtained ‘a nice margin’ of profit from ore in the upper levels of the Premier that previous owners had missed, but when Hardy’s Mines tried to follow this lode down, they had ‘very little success, as the ore seems to become poor at a short distance below the level to which Mr Hardy worked’. There were indications of the ore improving in parts of the lowest levels of the Colonist, but the

---

<sup>157</sup> See Marriage Notice, *New Zealand Herald*, 23 December 1898, p. 4; *Thames Star*, 17 April 1899, p. 2, 30 August 1900, p. 1, 21 August 1901, p. 2, 20 November 1905, p. 2, 12 January 1906, p. 2, 27 May 1907, p. 2, 1 December 1909, p. 2.

<sup>158</sup> Hardy’s Mines Ltd, Directors’ Report, 10 April 1906, and Receipts and Expenditure from 31 March 1905 to 31 March 1906, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 165 no. 1028, ANZ-A.

<sup>159</sup> Hardy’s Mines Ltd, Directors’ Report, 10 April 1906, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 165 no. 1028, ANZ-A.

<sup>160</sup> Hardy’s Mines Ltd, Summary of Capital and Shares, 14 May 1906, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 165 no. 1028, ANZ-A.

winze recently sunk on the Hero reef had been stopped at 11 feet because of too much water. His account of the treatment plant was much less enthusiastic than that given by Hardy, its designer. Brown described it as being 'fairly up to date', and, although 'not of the latest design', it 'should be capable of giving a fair output'. He expected that the ore extracted in the future would be 'more or less refractory', not containing much free gold but carrying iron, copper, zinc, and lead sulphides. 'Concentration and shipment of the concentrates to smelters' was 'practically out of the question, owing to the heavy charges'. No matter what process was adopted, the plant would 'be a very expensive one, so the mine should be thoroughly developed before' deciding on treatment.

Although little ore was likely to be found in the upper levels, 'a better class of rock' appeared to be contained in the Colonist mine, especially in the Hero lode; 'the future of the mines must depend entirely upon what can be found at the lower levels'. The company had 'laid off a line for a low-level tunnel' which, after driven 3,800 feet, would be 850 feet below the Colonist low level. He argued that a tunnel driven 900 feet from near the county tramway's May Queen incline would end up 250 feet below this level and 'serve very well as a prospecting tunnel'. Before driving this, the Hero reef should be tested at greater depth by sinking the existing winze by another 100 feet and then driving from that point. Using a diamond drill to test the reef system would also be advisable. He did not recommend continuing the Aroha Company's low-level tunnel, not only because of the cost but because there would be a mile of unpayable reef to cut through before it ended under the New Find ground:

Probably the cheapest and most satisfactory way in the long run of opening up these mines would be to drive the 3,800 feet tunnel, and if, by the use of the diamond drill, it could be shown that a more favourable class of country rock exists below the hard barren rock in which the lowest workings now are, the venture would carry with it very good chances of success, and might result in the opening up of a very valuable mine.

(There were several qualifications in that opinion.) This tunnel and a connection with the Colonist low level, plus some work on the reef at the end of the tunnel, would cost 'something like £25,000'. The shorter tunnel of 990 feet to connect with the Colonist low level and the development of the reef at the end of it, plus installing hoisting machinery to raise the ore to the tramway, would require about £10,000. 'Either of these sums could only be looked upon as preliminary expenditure, and, owing to the hardness of the ground and the refractory nature of the ore, the mines will have to be worked on a fairly large scale and the most up-to-date machinery and

methods employed'.<sup>161</sup> This was not an encouraging report: its cautious recommendations required considerable expenditure for uncertain success.

#### CONTINUING DECLINE

On 9 March 1906, the secretary informed the Minister of Mines that, 'in the effort to make this property reproductive', the company had spent 'in the last two years the whole of its capital with the exception of about £1000'. It was considering 'using the last of its capital in trying to obtain in London the amount deemed requisite by Mr Brown'. Predictably, he requested government assistance with the proposed new drive and received the equally predictable rejection.<sup>162</sup> On the same day, he requested six months' protection for the Premier Special Quartz Claim, which contained all the mines in which work had been done recently, 'pending introduction of further capital'. Despite his statement that the company could not afford to employ any men until capital was obtained, the warden required the employment of two men for the next four months.<sup>163</sup>

By late March, despite work having ceased there was a 'persistent' rumour that an English company was negotiating to purchase the property.<sup>164</sup> 'Obadiah', commenting on the search for capital, wrote that it 'would be interesting to turn up the prospectus and study the statements upon which this property was floated.... At the time, I expressed my opinions emphatically,<sup>165</sup> but the flotation was nevertheless easily accomplished. How now?'<sup>166</sup> In July, six months' protection was sought for the Gold King, which had been transferred to the company by Hardy in March, 'pending negotiations in England for capital'.<sup>167</sup> In November, another six months' protection was sought for all the mines, 'pending further capital'. The secretary declared that £18,440 had been spent up to the end of October, and that in the previous period of protection £345 had been spent on miners' wages, and that since protection had expired a further £190 had been spent on wages. Hutchinson had reported being 'on the verge

---

<sup>161</sup> F.C. Brown, 'Report on the Mining Property owned by Hardy's Mines, Ltd, and Situated at Waiorongomai, New Zealand', 1 March 1906, Mines Department, MD 1, 23/4/54, ANZ-W.

<sup>162</sup> F.W. Abbott to Minister of Mines, 9 March 1906; Under-Secretary, Mines Department, to F.W. Abbott, 27 March 1906, Mines Department, MD 1, 23/4/54, ANZ-W.

<sup>163</sup> Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1906, 14/1906, BBAV 11289/18a, ANZ-A.

<sup>164</sup> *New Zealand Herald*, 29 March 1906, p. 3.

<sup>165</sup> See paper on Edwin Henry Hardy.

<sup>166</sup> 'Obadiah', 'Shares and Mining', *Observer*, 15 May 1906, p. 20.

<sup>167</sup> Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1906, 4, 23/1906, BBAV 11289/18a, ANZ-A.

of getting further capital'.<sup>168</sup> Consequently, protection was granted.<sup>169</sup> Bush had 'no doubt' that, if the capital was obtained, 'full work' would resume, and in the meantime no one was 'being injured by the area being locked up, as the bulk of it has been lying idle for two or three years at least'.<sup>170</sup>

In August, mining recommenced, with 600 tons from the Premier being treated, reportedly 'satisfactorily'.<sup>171</sup> Coutts reported that six men had broken out any of the ore in sight that was considered payable, resulting in 651 tons producing £532 11s 9d. Concentrates from 139 tons were sent to England, giving a total value of £1,859 7s 6d, which was very disappointing in terms of both quantity and value.<sup>172</sup> By November the battery employed just two men, who were 'crushing on tribute' for all the miners of the district.<sup>173</sup> The *Te Aroha News*, as always hoping for better things, in May 1907 reporting that the battery was likely to restart 'very soon' after 'a rest of considerably over a year.... It was never seriously thought that Hardy's Mines were closed for good, and we only hope that profitable ore will be struck'.<sup>174</sup> The *New Zealand Mines Record* noted that 'the bullion returns obtained from the quartz treated, and the quantity obtained, has proved very disappointing to the shareholders of the present company, as they were led to believe it would be a payable concern if only a limited amount of capital was expended in opening up the mine'.<sup>175</sup>

#### AN EXPLANATION FOR THE COMPANY'S PROBLEMS

Hardy's youngest son Malcolm, who in the 1930s attempted to mine some of these reefs,<sup>176</sup> had an explanation for the failure of the company that amazed the mining inspector, John Francis Downey, as he reported:

The general impression I got from the information he gave me was that he was under the obsession that in the management of the mine during the time of Hardy's Mines Ltd certain sinister influences were at work, and much

<sup>168</sup> Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1906, 38/1906, BBAV 11289/18a, ANZ-A.

<sup>169</sup> *New Zealand Mines Record*, 16 December 1906, p. 194.

<sup>170</sup> R.S. Bush to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 17 April 1907, *AJHR*, 1907, C-3, p. 49.

<sup>171</sup> Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1906, 38/1906, BBAV 11289/18a, ANZ-A; *Auckland Weekly News*, 23 August 1906, p. 37.

<sup>172</sup> James Coutts to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 6 April 1907, *AJHR*, 1907, C-3, p. 14.

<sup>173</sup> Declaration of F.W. Abbott, 22 November 1906, Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1906, 38/1906, BBAV 11289/18a, ANZ-A.

<sup>174</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 4 May 1907, p. 2.

<sup>175</sup> *New Zealand Mines Record*, 16 August 1907, p. 10.

<sup>176</sup> See paper on his life.

underhand work was done with the object of frustrating the Company's efforts and giving the impression that the mine was valueless, the ulterior object of which was to force the Company out of business so that certain parties could later get the mine for themselves. The story runs that Mr Hardy Senr., after working the mine successfully for some years, sold it to Hardy's Mines Ltd on the understanding that he was to be retained as supervisor and that work was to be continued along the lines that he followed, but instead of this being done a new mine-manager was appointed who would not carry out his plan, and ridiculed the idea of working the mine in the way he wanted to. This manager is supposed to have been prompted in his actions by a certain outside individual who was anxious to get hold of the mine, and in the carrying out of their schemes they are said to have not rested until they got rid of Mr Hardy, and that they then belittled the possibilities of the mine in every way and induced the Directors to plunge into a heavy and useless expenditure that could only have the result of putting the Company out of business. However, the tale goes on, instead of throwing up the ground as expected, Hardy's Mines Ltd hung on to it for many years, thus defeating the plans of the schemers, both of whom died in the meantime.<sup>177</sup>

The basis of this story must have come from Malcolm's father but may have become garbled over the years. No mine manager was appointed while Hardy was acting as supervisor, and when he ceased to work for the company almost all mining ended while additional capital was being sought. Any temporary manager employed to take out blocks of ore would not have decided on future developments. It was more likely that Hardy believed Brown had provided bad advice by recommending the construction of a new low level,<sup>178</sup> and may have been told (or had come to believe) that some external element was attempting to denigrate the mine with the hope of acquiring it. Downey considered the story to be

a pure figment of the imagination, as it is inconceivable to me either that any mine-manager could act in the way described, or that any Board of Directors could be so foolish and incompetent as to allow themselves to be hoodwinked in such a way as mentioned, and, in any case, the mine, under one control or another, continued work for long after the manager referred to had left it, and it is highly improbable that the later operators did not try out all its possibilities.

---

<sup>177</sup> J.F. Downey to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 16 October 1931, Mines Department, MD 1, 23/4/54, ANZ-W.

<sup>178</sup> Interview with David Calder Hardy, Auckland, 19 April 1986, p. 10 of transcript.

He noted also that neither Hardy nor his son had made any attempt to take up the abandoned ground until driven to do so by poverty in 1931.<sup>179</sup>

### RECONSTRUCTING THE COMPANY

In March 1907, the warden was told that as Hutchinson was sailing back to New Zealand to report on his attempts to raise capital in London, the mines could not be worked.<sup>180</sup> By the end of May, the number of directors had reduced to four: Gordon, Yates, and Hutchinson remained, but Alexander Bulwer Campbell, of Napier, replaced Ormond and Wenley.<sup>181</sup> In June, all shareholders received notice of an extraordinary general meeting to be held in Auckland on 3 July to consider a scheme for reconstruction. A new company was to be formed ‘with the same name as the existing Company, and with a capital of £8,750 divided into 70,000 shares of 2/6 each’. It would inherit all the debts and liabilities and ‘allot to every member of the existing Company one fully paid-up share of 2/6 in the new Company in respect of every 4 shares of 10/- each in the existing Company’. The existing secretary and directors would continue in their posts. It was explained that the original scheme for reconstruction, whereby subscribing shareholders would receive three-quarters of the existing share capital in proportion to their subscription, was illegal,

as it would involve the issue of shares at a discount. The Directors have, therefore, substituted the scheme of reconstruction referred to above, **which has the same practical effect, the same proportions as between the old Shareholders and the new (or subscribing) Shareholders being preserved.**

These proposals were approved.<sup>182</sup> The new company purchased all the property of the old one for £1,562 10s, ‘to be satisfied by the issue to the Liquidator of twelve thousand five hundred fully paid-up shares’ of 2s 6d each. The plant and stock-in-trade were valued at a mere £750.<sup>183</sup> Should any of the shareholders in the old company

---

<sup>179</sup> J.F. Downey to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 16 October 1931, Mines Department, MD 1, 23/4/54, ANZ-W.

<sup>180</sup> Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Mining Applications 1907, 9/1907, BBAV 11289/19a, ANZ-A.

<sup>181</sup> Hardy’s Mines Ltd, Summary of Capital and Shares, 29 May 1907, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 165 no. 1028, ANZ-A.

<sup>182</sup> Hardy’s Mines Ltd, Extraordinary General Meeting, 3 July 1907, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 165 no. 1028, ANZ-A.

<sup>183</sup> Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Mining Registrations 1907, 1085/1907, BCDG 11288/3a, ANZ-A.

oppose the terms of the reconstruction, the liquidator was authorized to buy the interests of these ‘dissenting members’.<sup>184</sup> No prospectus was issued.<sup>185</sup>

On 25 July, 29 of the existing shareholders were allotted their paid-up shares, and 40,480 new shares were allotted, half their value being paid on allotment. Most of these were purchased by 21 of the existing shareholders and 3,040 were purchased by nine new investors. Apart from two Aucklanders, the new ones all lived in the Hawkes Bay or southern North Island, and included three sheep farmers, another two farmers, two merchants, an army officer, and a married woman.<sup>186</sup> Two months later, another 1,600 shares were sold to existing shareholders.<sup>187</sup> Once again, nobody living in the Te Aroha district acquired any shares, nor did any miners. Yet again the company was under-capitalized, for although it had a capital of £6,811, £2,630 was in paid-up shares that provided no income for the company.<sup>188</sup> Hutchinson received £263 by 30 June 1908, being his 5 per cent commission for raising £5,260 through this sale of shares.<sup>189</sup>

#### McLEAN’S LEVEL COMMENCED

In August, it was announced that the reconstruction had been completed and that ‘a considerable amount of work’ had been done ‘preparatory to commencing active operations’. Ernest Feltus Adams, a leading Thames mining surveyor,<sup>190</sup> had

made a detailed survey and has accurately located the line of the new tunnel, which it is proposed to drive for the purpose of intersecting the Hero lode. The length of this drive will be 850ft, and Mr Adams has drawn up plans and specifications for the work and has been instructed to call for tenders. The company is also advertising for a working manager.

---

<sup>184</sup> Memorandum of Association of Hardy’s Mines, 23 July 1907, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 165 no. 1028, ANZ-A.

<sup>185</sup> Declaration by Angus Gordon, Ernest Yates, and A.B. Campbell, 25 July 1907, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 165 no. 1028, ANZ-A.

<sup>186</sup> Hardy’s Mines Ltd, Return of Shares Allotted on 25 July 1907, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 165 no. 1028, ANZ-A.

<sup>187</sup> Hardy’s Mines Ltd, Return of Shares Allotted on 16 September 1907, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 165 no. 1028, ANZ-A.

<sup>188</sup> *AJHR*, 1908, C-3, p. 96.

<sup>189</sup> Hardy’s Mines Ltd, Balance Sheet to 30 June 1908, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 165 no. 1028, ANZ-A.

<sup>190</sup> See *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*, vol. 2, pp. 482-483.

Once one was appointed, a track would be cut from part-way up the May Queen tramway incline to the mouth of the proposed tunnel, where timber would be stacked; as well, the tramway would be ‘put in good working order’.<sup>191</sup> The following month, the directors reported that the portal of this tunnel had been fixed ‘at a point on the Premier Stream that with 850 feet of driving will give 161 feet of backs on the Hero reef, and will intersect that reef immediately underneath the point where the payable ore was worked in the No. 4 level’ (meaning the 1400-foot level, the lowest in the Colonist, which intersected the Hero reef).<sup>192</sup>

Protection for the battery and the mines was sought for the 12 months it would take to drive this tunnel, but only half that time was granted by the warden. The work, estimated to cost £1,912 10s, began before November.<sup>193</sup> Nine men were employed, and by the end of the year 80 feet had been driven by rock drills.<sup>194</sup> This slow progress was explained by the ‘considerable difficulty in getting the drilling plant on to the ground’, combined with ‘an inadequate water supply’ for the drills; a reservoir was being constructed to improve this supply.<sup>195</sup>

The contract for the tunnel was let to John McLean and Sons, sometimes known as McLean Bros.<sup>196</sup> It was a very small project for this large firm, then headed by brothers Murdoch and Neil McLean, which undertook several large contracts, notably one for the Otira rail tunnel to the West Coast of the South Island.<sup>197</sup> Because of the firm’s name this tunnel became known as McLean’s level. Officially, it was the Colonist No. 5 level and often referred to as the 1100-foot level, that being its height above the battery.

---

<sup>191</sup> *Thames Star*, 17 August 1907, p. 2; reprinted in *Auckland Weekly News*, 22 August 1907, p. 26. The track to this tunnel can still be traced.

<sup>192</sup> Hardy’s Mines Ltd, Directors’ Report, 16 September 1907, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 165 no. 1028, ANZ-A.

<sup>193</sup> Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Mining Applications 1907, 32/1907, BBAV 11289/19a, ANZ-A.

<sup>194</sup> Boyd Bennie (Inspector of Mines) to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 28 March 1908, *AJHR*, 1908, C-3, p. 17.

<sup>195</sup> *Thames Star*, 30 December 1907, p. 1.

<sup>196</sup> Hardy’s Mines Ltd, Directors’ Report, 22 August 1908, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 165 no. 1028, ANZ-A; *Auckland Weekly News*, 26 March 1908, p. 23.

<sup>197</sup> See *Progress*, 2 September 1907, p. 414; *Observer*, 3 October 1907, p. 4, 23 November 1907, p. 16, 22 December 1917, p. 4; *New Zealand Herald*, 15 October 1907, p. 6, 13 December 1917, p. 6, 4 August 1923, p. 4; *Evening Post*, 5 May 1939, p. 11. PapersPast has enormous details on their projects.

Driving was delayed in mid-March 1908 by a gelignite explosion that seriously wounded two miners.<sup>198</sup> In July, when complaining about Hardy wanting a machine site on part of its Gold King claim at the top of the former New Era tramway, the company stated that it had built workers' cottages there (because of being close to the new drive) and would probably build more. In addition, it was considering extending the tramway to the new tunnel, which would require using the contested land for a siding and stables. The mine manager fantasized that 'if developments now going on are successful company will be employing 60 or 70 men - Depends on length of payable ore whether greater number of men will be employed. Might be a 100 or a thousand'.<sup>199</sup> Also in that month, the Thames High School's board was told that, if McLean's level proved the existence of good ore, 'a large amount of capital would be expended as some very wealthy men would be prepared to subscribe goodly sums to put in a low level about 3000ft long'. In a 'short time' the company would 'ascertain whether the prospects were such as to warrant the expenditure of further capital'.<sup>200</sup>

In the following month, Bush was told that, should payable ore be found in the Hero reef, another level 3,500-feet in length would be driven from 'considerably lower down' the hillside. By that date, there was still 240 feet to drive in McLean's level, progress being dependent upon 'the water in the small creek near the claim' powering the ventilation and drilling machinery. It was (unrealistically) anticipated that the level would be finished in three months' time, after which another three months would be spent testing the reef. Thirteen men, including the mine manager, were at work.<sup>201</sup>

The directors, who had inspected the workings in May,<sup>202</sup> in August informed shareholders that 30 feet per week was the average rate of driving and that shortage of waterpower over summer was mainly responsible for the drive not having been completed. As usual in such reports, the prospects were 'very encouraging. Two reefs of fair size have already been met with', and at the face there was 'a network of likely looking quartz veins and mineralized leaders. Assays were taken at the intersection of the reefs cut, and values varied from 9s to 10s per ton' (which were hardly 'very encouraging'). None of these reefs had been investigated, 'all our energies being centred on the main objective, viz, the intersection of the Hero Lode'. Before reaching

---

<sup>198</sup> *New Zealand Herald*, 19 March 1908, p. 5.

<sup>199</sup> Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1908, 13/1908, BBAV 11289/19a, ANZ-A.

<sup>200</sup> *Thames Star*, 8 July 1908, p. 2, reprinted in *Te Aroha News*, 11 July 1908, p. 2.

<sup>201</sup> Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1908, 23/1908, BBAV 11289/19a, ANZ-A.

<sup>202</sup> *Thames Star*, 20 May 1908, p. 4.

that point it was ‘probable’ that ‘two more reefs will be intersected’.<sup>203</sup> To meet the cost of all this work,

your Directors have endeavoured to keep down all expenses to the utmost, and, amongst other matters, have surrendered the old Company’s lease of the County Tramway for a lump sum of £300. The lease in question had two years to run, and the maintenance of the line threatened to become a very heavy annual charge, more especially as, owing to the floods last year, much damage resulted to the line in many places.<sup>204</sup>

What the directors did not report was that its secretary had told the council that it was unlikely the tramway would be required during the term of the lease. As that expired on 21 January 1910,<sup>205</sup> clearly any output was expected to be a long way off.

Another economy made was the surrender of the grazing sections surrounding the battery and assay office, which had been inherited from Hardy, thereby ‘substantially’ reducing the annual rent charges.<sup>206</sup> A call of one shilling had been made, but the directors did not consider another call would be needed before McLean’s level was completed. ‘Should our hopes be realised upon completion of Messrs McLean and Son’s contract, a general meeting of shareholders will be called to consider the future course to be adopted’.<sup>207</sup>

## MINE MANAGERS

In October 1907, James Sprague Jobe was appointed as mine manager.<sup>208</sup> Coming from a family of Cornish mine managers and then aged 53, after having had ten years of

---

<sup>203</sup> Hardy’s Mines Ltd, Directors’ Report, 3 August 1908, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 165 no. 1028, ANZ-A.

<sup>204</sup> Hardy’s Mines Ltd, Directors’ Report, 3 August 1908, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 165 no. 1028, ANZ-A; see also Piako County Council, Minutes of Meetings of 18 May 1908, 15 June 1908, 20 July 1908, 21 September 1908, Matamata-Piako District Council Archives, Te Aroha.

<sup>205</sup> Piako County Council, *Te Aroha News*, 16 June 1908, p. 2.

<sup>206</sup> Hardy’s Mines Ltd, Directors’ Report, 3 August 1908, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 165 no. 1028, ANZ-A; Thames High School Board of Governors, Minutes of Meetings of 7 July 1908, 2 February 1909, 6 April 1909, 1 June 1909, High School Archives, Thames; *Te Aroha News*, 8 April 1909, p. 2; Piako County Council, Valuation Rolls 1908-1909, folio 50, Matamata-Piako District Council Archives, Te Aroha.

<sup>207</sup> Hardy’s Mines Ltd, Directors’ Report, 3 August 1908, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 165 no. 1028, ANZ-A.

<sup>208</sup> Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Mining Applications 1908, 13/1908, BBAV 11289/19a, ANZ-A.

mining experience in England he had arrived in Thames in 1877 and had mined there continuously before being employed by Hardy's Mines.<sup>209</sup> In the late 1880s, he had found two good patches of ore, one in the Cambria and one when working for his uncle, Thomas Radford, a leading mine manager,<sup>210</sup> as underground boss in the Alburnia.<sup>211</sup> During the 1890s and into the beginning of the next decade, he managed several Thames mines for short periods.<sup>212</sup> Immediately before being appointed to Waiorongomai, he was a manager at Tairua and Neavesville.<sup>213</sup> At the beginning of January 1909, perhaps because of not seeing a future for Hardy's Mines, he resigned,<sup>214</sup> and became a manager first at Tararu and then at Tairua.<sup>215</sup> Jobe's reward for a life spent mining was 20 years of suffering from miner's complaint.<sup>216</sup>

Before he departed, Jobe showed his successor, Walter Greening, over the property.<sup>217</sup> Greening, then aged 39,<sup>218</sup> since 1898 had mined at Great Barrier Island

---

<sup>209</sup> Notices of Intentions to Marry 1883, Births Deaths and Marriages, BDM 20/28, folio 224, ANZ-W; Marriage Certificate of James Jobe, 26 November 1883, 1883/2841, BDM; *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*, vol. 2, p. 479; A.F. Sawyer, handwritten recollections, W.G. Hammond Papers, folder 34a, MS 134, Library of the Auckland Institute and War Memorial Museum.

<sup>210</sup> See *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*, vol. 2, p. 861; *Observer*, 10 October 1891, p. 7, 11 August 1894, p. 23, 22 April 1905, p. 19, 24 August 1907, p. 4; *Thames Star*, 15 August 1907, p. 2.

<sup>211</sup> J.A. Shand, *A Souvenir of Thames: The Thames district past and present* (Thames, 1911), pp. 16-18; 'Some Rich Finds: Mr James Jobe's Narrative', in *Thames Goldfields Jubilee Souvenir 1967-1917*, ed. F.W. Weston (Thames, 1917), pp. 31-33; 1927 press cutting in Mahara Royal Scrapbook p. 6, MSC 22, Hamilton Public Library; *Thames Star*, 22 August 1935, p. 2.

<sup>212</sup> Mines Department, MD 1, 92/24, 97/739; 'Inspectors' Reports on Applications for Warrants to act as Provisional Mine Manager', no. 170, Mines Department, MD 4, 2/47, ANZ-W; *Thames Star*, 23 October 1890, p. 4; *Auckland Weekly News*, 14 March 1891, p. 13; *Thames Advertiser*, 25 June 1891, p. 2, 12 October 1896, p. 3, 14 September 1899, p. 2; *Thames Star*, 17 November 1903, p. 2.

<sup>213</sup> Thames Magistrate's Court, Minute Book 1894-1914, folio 121, BACL 13742/1a, ANZ-A; *Thames Star*, 10 July 1903, p. 2, 4 January 1906, p. 2, 8 January 1906, p. 2.

<sup>214</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 9 January 1909, p. 2.

<sup>215</sup> Thames Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1909, 196/1909, BACL 14350/59a; Mining Applications 1911, 113/1911, BACL 14350/63, ANZ-A; Inspector of Mines, Report dated 23 May 1910, Mines Department, MD 1, 10/149, ANZ-W.

<sup>216</sup> Miners' Relief Fund, Register of Applicants 1911-1915, Public Trust Office, PT 1/2, ABGQ 6366/1a, ANZ-A; Miners' Phthisis Pensions, list for Thames, 1932, Social Security, SS, W1844, box 8, M40, No. 2, ANZ-W; Death Certificate of James Sprague Jobe, 22 August 1935, 1935/19079, BDM.

<sup>217</sup> Walter Greening to Directors, Hardy's Mines Ltd, 13 July 1909, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 165 no. 1028, ANZ-A.

and Karangahake, and had qualified as a mine manager at the Karangahake School of Mines.<sup>219</sup> He assisted the government geologists who surveyed the Te Aroha district in 1911, and five years later collected ore specimens for the Wanganui Technical College.<sup>220</sup> In 1921, he claimed to possess other skills: when fined for failing to comply with instructions to cut down fruit trees infected with fire blight, he stated that he was successfully experimenting with finding a preventative and a cure for the disease,<sup>221</sup> a claim without any foundation.

Greening had a prickly personality. For instance, when, at the beginning of August 1909, the tramway foreman, John Samuel Hill,<sup>222</sup> informed Greening that only he was authorized to lower the company's shanty down the May Queen Incline, Greening challenged this.<sup>223</sup> He then complained to the county clerk, who informed Hill that he had given Greening 'a bit of a shake-up. I don't think he will have much love for me after this'.<sup>224</sup> After receiving several letters from Greening on this issue, the council resolved that he 'be informed that Hill is doing his duty to Council & that the Council will support him in same'.<sup>225</sup> One year later, Hill recorded that 'Greening Complained about going along Road at Battery took no Notice'.<sup>226</sup> In September 1912, Thomas Stewart, of Waiorongomai,<sup>227</sup> pleaded guilty to punching Greening;<sup>228</sup> because

<sup>218</sup> Death Certificate of Walter Greening, 22 December 1932, 1932/11453, BDM.

<sup>219</sup> Mines Department, MD 1, 03/1265, ANZ-W; photograph of students at Karangahake School of Mines, c. 1904, *Ohinemuri Regional History Journal*, vol. 6 no. 2 (October 1969), facing p. 25.

<sup>220</sup> P.G. Morgan to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 30 March 1914, Ministry of Commerce, AATJ 6090, 18/65, ANZ-W; Walter Greening to Director, Thames School of Mines, 8 July 1916, Inward Correspondence File 1907-1927, School of Mines Archives, Thames.

<sup>221</sup> Te Aroha Magistrate's Court, Criminal Record Book 1919-1921, entry for 28 January 1921, BCDG 11220/3a, ANZ-A; *Te Aroha News*, 25 July 1921, p. 2.

<sup>222</sup> See paper on the Piako County tramway at Waiorongomai.

<sup>223</sup> J.S. Hill, Waiorongomai Tramway Account Book 1909-1910, entries for 31 July 1909, 2 August 1909, John Samuel Hill Papers, MSC 0116, Hamilton Public Library; County Clerk to W.T. Hughes, 6 August 1909, Piako County Council, Letterbook 1909-1912, p. 138, Matamata-Piako District Council Archives, Te Aroha.

<sup>224</sup> County Clerk to J.S. Hill, 3 August 1909, Piako County Council, Letterbook 1909-1912, p. 133, Matamata-Piako District Council Archives, Te Aroha.

<sup>225</sup> Piako County Council, Minutes of Meeting held on 17 August 1909, Matamata-Piako District Council Archives, Te Aroha; Piako County Council, *Te Aroha News*, 19 August 1909, p. 3.

<sup>226</sup> J.S. Hill, Waiorongomai Tramway Account Book 1910-1912, entry for 17 August 1910, John Samuel Hill Papers, MSC 0116, Hamilton Public Library.

<sup>227</sup> See paper on prospectors and investors in the Te Aroha district in the 1930s.

<sup>228</sup> Te Aroha Magistrate's Court, Criminal Record Book 1907-1913, 67/1912, BCDG 11200/2a, ANZ-A.

of the loss of the local newspaper for that month, the cause of their quarrel is not known. In 1919, a mine owner wrote that he did not wish to repair the tramway under Greening's supervision because the latter would 'be difficult to work with under any circumstances'.<sup>229</sup> In the following year, Greening complained to the council about their permitting a water race to be constructed alongside the tramway and about their failure to repair the latter, and offered to do the work himself, 'but stipulated for absolutely no interference by anybody'. One councillor

took exception to the form of Mr Greening's remarks, saying any deputation coming before the Council should confine itself to stating the case as fully and as clearly as possible and then withdraw from the room.... He did not like anyone coming and practically "laying down the law" as to what the Council should or should not do.<sup>230</sup>

#### FIRST DEVELOPMENTS UNDER GREENING'S MANAGEMENT

Two months before taking up his post, McLean's level was nearing completion.<sup>231</sup> Immediately after his appointment, the company sought protection for all its mines, because, although the new level was completed, at a cost of £2 5s per foot, a contract had been let to drive 50 feet both ways on the Hero reef; once this driving was completed, another contract would be let to prove the values. 'All the work being done' was prospecting. 'Nothing to crush, & we cannot use our plant. We have a manager employed and besides him another man or two'. It was necessary 'to discover how deep workings will have to be carried on before we can begin operations'. On the advice of the best mining engineer they could employ (presumably not Greening), prospecting was being done in the 'most likely section'. Should good values be proved, 'shareholders will put up another £20000 for further development work' in the lower levels, as the upper levels had been worked out. It would take six months to test the value of the Hero reef; although McLean's level had cut several lodes, 'none of the ore has been worth sending to the mill'. The request to work with eight men was approved.<sup>232</sup>

On 19 January 1909, the directors told shareholders that, after McLean's level was completed, shortly before Christmas, a rise had been commenced to connect with the winze in the level above. Only 20 feet had been driven before the holidays, leaving

---

<sup>229</sup> J.A. Pond to Matthew Paul, 10 September 1919, Inspector of Mines, BBDO 18634, A902, MM138, ANZ-A.

<sup>230</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 7 July 1920, p. 2.

<sup>231</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 3 November 1908, p. 2.

<sup>232</sup> *Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1909*, 7, 8/1909, BBAV 11289/20a, ANZ-A.

160 feet still to drive. 'To provide funds for the carrying out of the rise on the Hero lode and to prospect on each side of the reef at the point of intersection, your Board has decided to call up the remaining 3d due on contributing shares'.<sup>233</sup> When Greening took charge, his recommendation that this rise be abandoned in favour of driving north and south on the reef was accepted, work to begin once an air compressor was installed to provide ventilation. He had to report in July that 100 feet was driven in each direction

without anything of a payable nature being discovered. The lode going south was a large body of ore, and when driven on was taken out for a width of four feet without disclosing the hangingwall and where driven on in a northerly direction it proved to be on an average about 3 feet wide. Owing to the disappointing nature of this ore body, a visit of inspection was paid to the mine by the Directors, when it was decided that these drives be stopped, and the extension of the Main No. 5 Level [McLean's level] be gone on with, and after having the different faces squared up a contract was let to extend the Main Level a distance of 100 feet. When about 10 feet had been driven on this contract a large body of high-grade ore was intersected, which proved to be the main portion of the Hero Lode, the lode driven on previously proving to be a branch from this lode. In continuation of the cross-cut through the Hero Lode, it was proved to be a body of ore 13 feet in thickness, showing values in gold, silver and copper from wall to wall, the first 5 feet on the hanging wall side of the lode proving to be the richest; in fact, there is enough copper in this latter portion to pay working expenses without the gold and silver contents in the ore. I may state that from the No. 5 Level to the No. 4 Level above, where rich ore was got in a winze sunk on this lode, will give us 175 feet of backs, and this means a large block of ore for stoping.

The Main No. 5 Level at the present time has reached a point about 100 feet from the Hero Lode, and in that space two more lodes have been cut, each one showing a width of two feet six inches, but where intersected did not appear to be of any value. We have now got about 80 feet to go to reach the Colonist Lode. This lode will be intersected at a point underneath where a lot of gold has been taken out by former companies owning the ground. The Main No. 5 Level at the present time is traversing a splendid belt of gold-bearing andesite country.

If driven another 900 feet from where it would intersect the Colonist lode, McLean's level would enable the exploration of the Premier ground at depth and would give about 500 feet of backs which Greening anticipated would contain rich ore underneath a barren zone, as at Karangahake. Further development of two of the Premier levels had good possibilities of finding payable ore, and after being driven a total of 1,500 feet McLean's level would strike good ore below the New Find workings.

---

<sup>233</sup> Hardy's Mines Ltd, Half-Yearly Report and Balance Sheet, 19 January 1909, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 165 no. 1028, ANZ-A.

He concluded his report on his first six months' management by stating that he considered 'the property to be second to none in the Dominion',<sup>234</sup> an absurd claim.

#### RAISING CAPITAL AND DEVELOPING THE PROPERTY

By 1909, two of the directors lived in Auckland, two in Napier, and one each at Palmerston North and Shannon.<sup>235</sup> In their report of 14 July, the directors explained to its shareholders that, as the 13-foot reef struck in McLean's level after 830 feet gave a value of £3 18s 9d, 'a most encouraging prospect', they had decided to carry on this level for 220 feet to end up below the Colonist workings. 'Should the Company be fortunate enough to strike another payable reef in that locality, the future of the property would be practically assured, and in all probability proposals for an option by a strong Syndicate will be submitted to you'. To meet the cost of this work, the remaining unallotted shares would be sold to raise another £2,000. Under the terms of the articles of the company, these had first to be offered to existing shareholders, but should there be insufficient response they anticipated 'no difficulty' in placing shares with the public. 'In conclusion, your Directors can safely congratulate Shareholders on the very encouraging prospects'.<sup>236</sup> On 6 August, another allotment of 12,364 shares was made, 1s 6d being paid thereupon, leaving one shilling to be called up; all these shares were taken up by existing shareholders.<sup>237</sup>

The directors also recommended floating the Sceptre Extended and Toledo Special Quartz Claims into a subsidiary company. This ground contained the Aroha Company's abandoned low level, which it was proposed to extend. 'Hardy's Mines will retain a large fully paid-up interest in the proposed Subsidiary Company, and you will be given an opportunity of subscribing to the fresh Capital required'.<sup>238</sup> The provisional directors of Waiorongomai Main Reef Ltd were all large shareholders in Hardy's

---

<sup>234</sup> Walter Greening to Directors, Hardy's Mines, 13 July 1909, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 165 no. 1028, ANZ-A; for photograph of the portal to McLean's level, see *Auckland Weekly News*, 24 June 1909, Supplement, p. 2.

<sup>235</sup> See list of directors in Hardy's Mines Ltd, Summary of Capital and Shares, 5 September 1908, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 165 no. 1028, ANZ-A.

<sup>236</sup> Hardy's Mines Ltd, Directors' Report, 14 July 1909, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 165 no. 1028, ANZ-A.

<sup>237</sup> Hardy's Mines Ltd, Return of Allotment of Shares, 6 August 1909, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 165 no. 1028, ANZ-A.

<sup>238</sup> Hardy's Mines Ltd, Directors' Report, 14 July 1909, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 165 no. 1028, ANZ-A.

Mines, and included three of its directors, F.W. Abbott, Yates, and Engels.<sup>239</sup> Its prospectus, issued on 21 August 1909, after quoting the sections in Brown's report about the geology and mining history, recorded the tonnage of ore treated in earlier years in a way that implied it had been taken from this tunnel. In fact, this tonnage was the production of the whole field, and none had come from this drive. Omitted was Brown's explicit warning against continuing it because there were 'no indications of ore in payable quantities' for the next mile that would have to be driven.<sup>240</sup> Greening gave a short account of the lodes in the upper levels, which he considered likely to be payable. Thomas Gavin,<sup>241</sup> who had supervised the driving of the Aroha Company's tunnel, claimed that its prospects and those at higher levels were 'very good'. He stated that it should be extended, in smaller dimensions, for 'in all probability rich shoots of ore will be met' where side reefs met the main one. 'I have no hesitation in saying that, if developed systematically, it will become a valuable mining property'.<sup>242</sup>

Despite the special pleading from Gavin in particular, who may or may not have believed what he was writing but no doubt was well paid for his advice, investors were not interested, and nothing further was heard of this proposal. The failure of the New Zealand Exploration Company<sup>243</sup> and of this tunnel, driven by its subsidiary, Aroha Mines, must have been sufficiently well known to stymie this last attempt to extend it.

In September, two more miners' huts were erected at the foot of the May Queen incline, and several extra men were driving on the Hero reef.<sup>244</sup> In the last week of December, the two Auckland directors visited the mine

to personally inspect some very promising developments that have taken during the past week. They brought back to Auckland samples of ore from three different points in the workings, which have been assayed with very satisfactory results. The prospecting tunnel lately completed, and which is now being extended, has opened up some large ore bodies, and a vigorous policy is to be pursued in working the mine.<sup>245</sup>

---

<sup>239</sup> Prospectus of Waiorongomai Main Reef, Ltd, 21 August 1909, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 236 no. 1382, ANZ-A.

<sup>240</sup> Prospectus of Waiorongomai Main Reef, Ltd, 21 August 1909, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 236 no. 1382, ANZ-A; F.C. Brown, Report for Hardy's Mines Ltd, 1 March 1906, p.8, Mines Department, MD 1, 23/4/54, ANZ-W.

<sup>241</sup> See paper on his life.

<sup>242</sup> Prospectus of Waiorongomai Main Reef, Ltd, 21 August 1909, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 236 no. 1382, ANZ-A.

<sup>243</sup> See paper on this company.

<sup>244</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 28 September 1909, p. 2.

<sup>245</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 30 December 1909, p. 36.

The year, according to their account, had ended on a positive note, although the battery, which had been repaired in mid-year,<sup>246</sup> was yet to be used.

Although the new warden, Frederick James Burgess, reported in May 1910 that the company's 'vigorous prospecting' had led to encouraging results,<sup>247</sup> no ore had been crushed during the previous 12 months.<sup>248</sup> The report written by Matthew Paul, the new inspector of mines, revealed that Burgess had exaggerated, for the eastern branch of the Hero lode had been driven on from McLean's level for 105 feet to the north and for 100 feet to the south 'without disclosing anything of a payable nature'. Consequently, this drive on the reef had been abandoned, and McLean's level had been continued, striking the Colonist lode after another 165 feet.<sup>249</sup> (The value of this 25-foot wide lode was not given.) The company had already applied, in February, for six month's protection for all its claims, and had received this on 22 March; the only work to continue was driving of McLean's level by six men. The company's secretary told Burgess that the shareholders were 'out of pocket about £30,000' since the company was formed; for the last few years, about £2,000 had been spent annually. Another report from Brown was awaited: 'We have carried out up to date what he had recommended. We hope shortly to increase our funds. If Mr Brown's report is favourable to spending further money, I have no doubt the Shareholders will raise the necessary money'.<sup>250</sup> McLean's level had been driven for 1050 feet, and 450 feet had been driven on the Hero lode. As all the calls had been paid-up, 're-construction of some form' would be required.<sup>251</sup> Greening informed Burgess that 'we have discovered a little - the long tunnel has still to be driven further to cut the Welcome lode - It will have to go another 500 feet - We have had no return from the mine'.<sup>252</sup>

## COLLAPSE AND RECONSTRUCTION

---

<sup>246</sup> Photograph and caption, *Auckland Weekly News*, 24 June 1909, Supplement, p. 2.

<sup>247</sup> F.J. Burgess to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 20 May 1910, *AJHR*, 1910, C-3, p. 40.

<sup>248</sup> *AJHR*, 1910, C-3, p. 65.

<sup>249</sup> Matthew Paul (Inspector of Mines) to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 31 March 1910, *AJHR*, 1910, C-3, p. 18.

<sup>250</sup> Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1910, 12/1910, BBAV 11289/20a, ANZ-A.

<sup>251</sup> Warden's Court, *Te Aroha News*, 24 March 1910, p. 2.

<sup>252</sup> Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1910, 12/1910, BBAV 11289/20a, ANZ-A.

In June 1910, a sample of half a ton was crushed,<sup>253</sup> but the unreported result cannot have been payable. The directors' report of 5 October consisted of just four sentences:

Operations upon your property have been confined during the past six months to further extending No. 5 [McLean's] Level towards the old Premier workings, with the view of intersecting the Vulcan Lode, the scene of successful workings many years ago. Cessation of this work has been forced upon your Board owing to shortage of funds,

for the response to the reconstruction of the company, attempted in 1909, had been 'inadequate'. The directors could either voluntarily liquidate the company or raise sufficient capital, estimated by Brown 'at about £2,500', through a mortgage upon its assets. Brown's scheme was not reported in the press but must be presumed to have advised continuing McLean's level. The directors were negotiating to raise capital through a mortgage to enable the continuation of the work recommended by Brown 'and thus sufficiently develop your property to enable a satisfactory sale to be made'.<sup>254</sup> In other words, it was no longer planned to mine any ore but instead the directors hoped to prove it to be of sufficient value to allow them to sell the property and thereby recoup their losses.

H.D. Abbott informed Burgess that, after the original Hardy's Mines Ltd had spent £21,315, the reconstructed company had spent a further £7,031.<sup>255</sup> The latest balance sheet showed that all the value of the allocated shares had been called up.<sup>256</sup> On 17 November, the secretary of a company owning adjoining ground wrote that Hardy's Mines was 'going into Liquidation. Money to work the Company's properties was not forthcoming, hence there was no alternative but to liquidate'.<sup>257</sup> A shareholders' meeting held six days later ratified the directors' decision, reached in September, to wind up the company.<sup>258</sup> All its property would be sold by public auction.<sup>259</sup>

---

<sup>253</sup> J.S. Hill to Minister of Mines, 10 June 1918, Mines Department, MD 1, 21/2/4, ANZ-W.

<sup>254</sup> Hardy's Mines Ltd, Directors' Report, 5 October 1910, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 165 no. 1028, ANZ-A.

<sup>255</sup> Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1910, 97/1910, BBAV 11289/20a, ANZ-A.

<sup>256</sup> Hardy's Mines Ltd, Balance Sheet at 30 June 1910, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 165 no. 1028, ANZ-A.

<sup>257</sup> J.J. Macky to Percy Spencer, 17 November 1910, Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1910, 88/1910, BBAV 11289/20a, ANZ-A.

<sup>258</sup> Hardy's Mines Ltd, Meeting of 23 November 1910, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 165 no. 1028, ANZ-A; see also *New Zealand Gazette*, 4 May 1911, p. 1505.

<sup>259</sup> Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1910, 97/1910, BBAV 11289/20a, ANZ-A.

An immediate attempt was made to float New Hardy's Mines Ltd, with a capital of £10,500 in 210,000 one-shilling shares. It was intended to purchase the property for £3,500 in the form of 70,000 fully paid-up shares in the new company. The directors (who were to be the last ones) were Gordon, Yates, Abbott, McLean, Campbell, and Abraham; Engels' name was crossed out on the form submitted to the Companies Office. The name of Thomas Mason Chambers, another sheep farmer, of Havelock North, was also crossed out, and the name of George Read Bloomfield, 'gentleman', of Auckland,<sup>260</sup> was handwritten on the form as a new director.<sup>261</sup> (George Frederick Read Bloomfield, to give his full name, with his brothers owned 'a large pastoral run' near Gisborne.<sup>262</sup> When he died, in 1925, he left an estate worth £77,582 15s 9d.<sup>263</sup>) This proposed company was not floated.

The *Te Aroha News* was pleased to announce that, on 27 January 1911, the property had been sold to a 'small but influential and wealthy syndicate' for an undisclosed sum. The old company, it claimed, had not been able to carry out necessary development work because its constitution 'rendered it unworkable as a going business concern. It was therefore decided to sell the mine on the open market for what it would fetch, and no doubt the more alert and businesslike of the old shareholders have acquired large interests in the new concern', for the newspaper had been told that 'recent prospecting has given most satisfactory results both as regards quantity and quality of ore'.<sup>264</sup> Its rival, the *Te Aroha Mail*, agreed it was 'well-known that men with large capital at their command have taken over Hardy's Mines'.<sup>265</sup> The new syndicate comprised men who had been shareholders of Hardy's Mines, and in most cases directors: Ormond, McLean, Engels, Abraham, Yates, George Prior Donnelly, and Edward Heathcote Williams. Gordon, the former chairman of directors, was the secretary;<sup>266</sup> he and Yates were the only Aucklanders involved.

(Donnelly, who had acquired 250 when the original company was launched,<sup>267</sup> was a friend of both Ormond and McLean.<sup>268</sup> A sheep farmer in the Hastings district,<sup>269</sup>

---

<sup>260</sup> See advertisement, *New Zealand Herald*, 22 April 1905, p. 7.

<sup>261</sup> Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 252 no. 1466, ANZ-A.

<sup>262</sup> *Auckland Star*, 27 May 1925, p. 9; *Hawke's Bay Tribune*, 29 May 1925, p. 4.

<sup>263</sup> Probates, BBAE 1569, R21459393, ANZ-A [online].

<sup>264</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 4 February 1911, p. 2.

<sup>265</sup> *Te Aroha Mail*, 2 May 1911, p. 2.

<sup>266</sup> W. McMiken to obliterated name [John Benney], 20 December 1912, Eric Coppard Papers, Waihi.

<sup>267</sup> Return of Allotment of Shares in Hardy's Mines Ltd, 15 May 1904, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 165 no. 1028, ANZ-A.

<sup>268</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 28 April 1904, p. 42.

<sup>269</sup> For example, *Observer*, 18 April 1885, p. 13, 11 December 1930, p. 7.

he had been a shareholder in Hardy's Mines since 1904, his largest interest being 2,000 shares in July 1907.<sup>270</sup> He had married Airini Tonore, daughter of a leading rangatira, Karauna Pupu, of Ngati Kahungunu,<sup>271</sup> one of the leading Maori women of the day.<sup>272</sup> Through various means, including the dubious, she had acquired large areas of tribal land for herself and her husband, although when she willed this land to him, he declined to accept it.<sup>273</sup> When he died in 1917 his estate was worth nearly £200,000.<sup>274</sup> Williams was a prominent solicitor at Hastings.<sup>275</sup> He had a small number of investments in other gold and copper mining companies.<sup>276</sup> He was a descendant of the pioneer missionary family.<sup>277</sup> On his death in 1931, he left an estate valued at under £100 but in fact worth nothing.<sup>278</sup>)

#### THE NEW COMPANY'S OPERATIONS UNTIL 1920

The new owners retained both the name Hardy's Mines Ltd and Greening as their mine manager.<sup>279</sup> They intended to carry on with the planned development, continuing McLean's level until it reached the Premier lode, 'when an extensive scheme of development work will be undertaken if funds are available'. The *Te Aroha News* was of opinion that this was 'one of the best prospecting propositions' in New Zealand,<sup>280</sup> another example of the bizarre claims produced by local enthusiasts. In early April, work was about to restart now that larger air pipes had been installed in McLean's level. Once this drive was below the Premier workings, a connection would be made

---

<sup>270</sup> Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 165 no. 1028, ANZ-A.

<sup>271</sup> Death Certificate of Airini Donnelly, 7 June 1909, 1909/2947, BDM; S.W. Grant, 'Airini Donnelly', *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, vol. 2 (Wellington, 1993), p. 121.

<sup>272</sup> See *Observer*, 29 June 1901, p. 6, 14 May 1904, p. 4, 19 June 1909, p. 5; *Auckland Weekly News*, 10 November 1899, Supplement, pp. 6-7, 10 June 1909, p. 25; Grant, p. 121.

<sup>273</sup> Grant, p. 121; for examples of his landholdings, see *A Return of the Freeholders of New Zealand ...* (Wellington, 1884), p. D 34; *New Zealand Gazette*, 1 March 1888, p. 292; *Thames Star*, 22 February 1906, p. 2; *New Zealand Herald*, 4 December 1911, p. 8, 10 August 1917, p. 6.

<sup>274</sup> Probates, AAOW W3846, 1917/2389, ANZ-W.

<sup>275</sup> *Hawke's Bay Tribune*, 28 November 1931, p. 5, 1 December 1931, p. 10; *Daily Telegraph* (Napier), 30 November 1931, p. 4.

<sup>276</sup> *New Zealand Gazette*, 15 August 1895, p. 1264, 5 January 1899, p. 23; Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 213 no. 1266, ANZ-A.

<sup>277</sup> John Berry, *A Man's Tall Dream: The story of Eastwoodhill* (Gisborne, 1997), p. 69.

<sup>278</sup> Probates, AAOW 22775, R23220171, ANZ-W [online].

<sup>279</sup> Death Notice, *Auckland Star*, 18 July 1932, p. 1.

<sup>280</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 14 February 1911, p. 3.

with the upper levels, ‘thereby ensuring sufficient ventilation for the vigorous prosecution of development work on the different lodes’. That was some way off, for the initial contract was for only 100 feet of driving.<sup>281</sup> McLean, Williams and Gordon inspected the work on 27 April, the *Te Aroha News* understanding that their visit meant that the work would be ‘largely developed’.<sup>282</sup> As they were not using their battery, in the second half of 1911 it was sold to the Waitawheta Company, ‘very cheaply’ according to one local resident.<sup>283</sup> (The records of this company revealed that it had purchased the ‘Battery, Machinery, Buildings, and Plant’ for £525.<sup>284</sup>) In August, the Waitawheta Company agreed to take over the battery’s water race.<sup>285</sup>

Should additional capital be raised in London, the new syndicate planned to build a new plant closer to their workings and to obtain electric power from the Waihi transmission line which crossed the range on the eastern side of the Waiorongomai Stream.<sup>286</sup> After the battery burnt down in 1911, samples of ore and concentrates were sent for treatment at the experimental plant at the Thames School of Mines.<sup>287</sup> In October that year, when acknowledging receipt of £18 15s for 72oz 12dwt of gold valued at the low rate of 5s 2d per ounce (in 1906, the price of Te Aroha gold was £4 4a per ounce),<sup>288</sup> Gordon regretted ‘you are not treating a 1000 tons of ore for us of the same quality’.<sup>289</sup> From an unspecified winze, 9cwt treated at Thames returned £12 16s.<sup>290</sup>

Matthew Paul wrote on 31 March 1912 that work had ‘been confined to driving 400ft’ in McLean’s level ‘to intersect the Vulcan lode in the Premier’. The latter should

---

<sup>281</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 4 April 1911, p. 2, 8 April 1911, p. 2.

<sup>282</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 29 April 1911, p. 2.

<sup>283</sup> J.S. Hill to Minister of Mines, 10 June 1918, Mines Department, MD 1, 21/2/4, ANZ-W.

<sup>284</sup> Waitawheta Gold Prospecting Company, Statement of Accounts for Half-Year to 31 December 1911, Company Files, BADV 5181, box 222 no. 1314, ANZ-A.

<sup>285</sup> J.J. Macky (Secretary, Waitawheta Gold Prospecting Company) to H.R. Bush (Receiver of Gold Revenue, Te Aroha), 31 July 1913, Te Aroha Warden’s Court, General Office Correspondence 1913, BBAV 11584/6f, ANZ-A.

<sup>286</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 8 August 1911, p. 2; Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Mining Applications 1913, 15, 33/1913, BBAV 11289/22a, ANZ-A.

<sup>287</sup> Thames School of Mines, Experimental Plant Record Book 1896-1916, entry for 26 June 1911; Bank of New Zealand, Thames, to Director, Thames School of Mines, 2 October 1911, Inward Correspondence File 1907-1929, School of Mines Archives, Thames.

<sup>288</sup> *AJHR*, 1907, C-3, p. 107.

<sup>289</sup> Angus Gordon to W.H. Baker (Director, Thames School of Mines), 5 October 1911, Inward Correspondence File 1907-1929, School of Mines Archives, Thames.

<sup>290</sup> Matthew Paul to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 31 March 1912, *AJHR*, 1912, C-2, p. 37.

be cut in about 150 feet, when a rise would be driven to 'connect with the winze from the upper level'.<sup>291</sup> After the drive was extended by 600 feet, 'unfortunately, the capital of this company became exhausted'.<sup>292</sup> Consequently, six months' protection for all the mines was granted in September. Gordon told Burgess that the syndicate had 'spent £3000 in 18 mos. - now called a halt - difficulties in getting contractors'.<sup>293</sup>

During this period of protection, another attempt was made to sell the property. When William McMiken, the superintendent of the Komata Gold Mining Company was sent to inspect it, he reported that McLean's level had stopped 'a little short of what should have been done', not having reached the Premier ground. He was assured that assays of the Hero reef cut in this level gave £3 per ton, which did not match those when it was driven on before being abandoned. Some ore in the Premier appeared to be worth investigating, but he could not give any idea of the value of lodes that had not been stoped, 'owing to no records of any assays being kept'. McMiken's samples assayed at £7 per ton and appeared to be treatable by modern methods with 'no trouble'. He was negotiating for the right to see the plans and to do more investigating: the syndicate was willing to grant an option but had not revealed its terms. Further examination would be worthwhile.<sup>294</sup>

Accordingly, John Benney,<sup>295</sup> mine manager for the Komata Reefs Company, supervised four men who took from 400 to 500 samples over a six-week period; they proved to be 'hopelessly unpayable'.<sup>296</sup> In July 1913 McMiken's report was sent to English investors who had formed the New Zealand Mines Trust Company.<sup>297</sup> At first, McMiken had been 'favourably impressed with the possibilities of the property', but upon investigation it had been discovered that the ore in the upper portions was exhausted and that the indications in the lower levels were 'so unpromising that any scheme of deep level drives would be purely speculation'. He did not recommend their

---

<sup>291</sup> Matthew Paul to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 31 March 1912, *AJHR*, 1912, C-2, p. 37.

<sup>292</sup> Matthew Paul to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, n.d., *AJHR*, 1913, C-2, p. 21.

<sup>293</sup> Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1912, 93/1912, BBAV 11289/22a, ANZ-A.

<sup>294</sup> W. McMiken to obliterated name [John Benney], 20 December 1912, Eric Coppard Papers, Waihi.

<sup>295</sup> See paper on Henry Hopper Adams.

<sup>296</sup> J.F. Downey to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 25 July 1932, Inspector of Mines, BBDO 18634, A902, MM220, ANZ-A.

<sup>297</sup> Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1913, 15/1913, BBAV 11289/22a, ANZ-A; F.J. Burgess to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 31 July 1913, Mines Department, MD 1, 23/4/54, ANZ-W.

investing in this property.<sup>298</sup> The Komata Reefs Company itself ‘declined to undertake operations’ once they had examined both the available data and the workings.<sup>299</sup>

McLean went to London in 1913 to raise capital, but, according to Gordon, the Waihi miners’ strike ‘retarded’ negotiations. Instead of returning as planned, McLean remained in London, and during February 1914 negotiated with the New Zealand Mines Trust.<sup>300</sup> In March, Burgess was told that the syndicate was ‘now sanguine of obtaining the required capital within six months’. They required more capital than could be raised in New Zealand.<sup>301</sup> In November, when applying for another six months’ protection, Greening stated that McLean was still in London; he claimed there had been good prospects of raising capital there ‘when the war in Europe commenced and put a stop to all arrangements’.<sup>302</sup>

Although mining had ceased, some income could be made from the tailings. As a portion had gone into the stream, in December 1912 the syndicate wrote to the high school board ‘re Extended River claim at Waiorongomai’.<sup>303</sup> This was not applied for, but in May 1913, when applying for another six months’ protection of all its mines ‘pending raising further Capital’, Greening informed Burgess that, while the property was ‘under offer to certain parties’, the only work being done was to erect a tailings plant.<sup>304</sup> The plant, described as ‘small but complete’,<sup>305</sup> was erected for a cost of £500.<sup>306</sup> It used the cyanide process.<sup>307</sup> Under Greening’s management it was ‘a hive of industry’,<sup>308</sup> and, he stated, brought ‘a little profit’.<sup>309</sup> Greening and one other man were the only workers, and during 1913 treated 44 tons, producing 55oz 3dwt, valued at

---

<sup>298</sup> R.G. Milligan to J.F. Downey, 18 July 1932, Inspector of Mines, BBDO 18634, A902, MM222, ANZ-A.

<sup>299</sup> Obliterated name [E.F. Adams?] to R.G. Milligan, 25 November 1933, Eric Coppard Papers, Waihi.

<sup>300</sup> Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Mining Applications 1914, 5/1914, BBAV 11289/22a, ANZ-A; Warden’s Court, *Te Aroha News*, 18 February 1914, p. 2.

<sup>301</sup> F.J. Burgess to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 27 March 1914, Mines Department, MD 1, 23/4/54, ANZ-A.

<sup>302</sup> Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Mining Applications 1914, 24/1914, BBAV 11289/22a, ANZ-A.

<sup>303</sup> Thames High School Board of Governors, Minutes of Meeting held on 10 December 1912, High School Archives, Thames.

<sup>304</sup> Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Mining Applications 1913, 15/1913, BBAV 11289/22a, ANZ-A.

<sup>305</sup> Matthew Paul to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, n.d., *AJHR*, 1914, C-2, p. 37.

<sup>306</sup> Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Mining Applications 1914, 24/1914, BBAV 11289/22a, ANZ-A.

<sup>307</sup> Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Registrations 1911-1914, nos. 2203, 2214, BCDG 11288/4a, ANZ-A; Matthew Paul to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, n.d., *AJHR*, 1914, C-2, p. 37.

<sup>308</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 19 February 1914, p. 56.

<sup>309</sup> Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Mining Applications 1914, 24/1914, BBAV 11289/22a, ANZ-A.

£46 8s 3d.<sup>310</sup> During 1914, 1,570 tons of tailings were treated to produce 3,346oz 15dwt, worth £1,427 7s 8d.<sup>311</sup> The syndicate planned to use the money obtained from treating these tailings to further develop the mine.<sup>312</sup>

In July 1914, the mine manager's house, still occupied by Greening, was destroyed by fire.<sup>313</sup> When six months' protection was sought (successfully) in November, Greening deposed 'that during the six years a number of men had been employed. Could not say how many were employed during that time, but twelve men were at work for a period of fifteen months. The company had spent about £1000 a year at the claims. Lately tailings had been treated, with some success'.<sup>314</sup>

Fifty fewer tons were treated during 1915, producing 4,091oz 14dwt, value £1,403 13s 3d.<sup>315</sup> Early that year, the syndicate successfully obtained a reduction of all its rents from 7s 6d to 2s 6d per acre as well as the suspension of labour conditions.<sup>316</sup> They had spent at least £16,000 'for very little return', Burgess was told. He sympathized, informing the minister in July that they were 'not now getting gold, being unfortunate. They have done an enormous lot of prospecting and lately have been treating old tailings. Waiorongomai is in a special condition: the gold is a will-of-the-wisp'.<sup>317</sup>

In 1916, three men treated the slags produced by the cyanide process, producing 208oz 1dwt, worth £68 2s 3d.<sup>318</sup> An attempt was made in that year to make money by selling some of the machinery to A. & G. Price of Thames, but that firm regretted being unable to make an offer 'that would be acceptable to you'.<sup>319</sup> More samples of quartz

---

<sup>310</sup> *AJHR*, 1914, C-2, p. 75.

<sup>311</sup> *AJHR*, 1915, C-2, p. 45.

<sup>312</sup> Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1914, 5/1914, BBAV 11289/22a, ANZ-A.

<sup>313</sup> *Waikato Argus*, 14 July 1914, p. 2.

<sup>314</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 4 November 1914, p. 2.

<sup>315</sup> *AJHR*, 1916, C-2, p. 41.

<sup>316</sup> E.H. Williams to Minister of Mines, 21 January 1915, Mines Department, MD 1, 23/4/54, ANZ-W; Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1915, 1, 8/1915, BBAV 11289/22a, ANZ-A.

<sup>317</sup> F.J. Burgess to Minister of Mines, 15 July 1915, enclosing J.J. Macky's evidence to Warden's Court, Mines Department, MD 1, 23/4/54, ANZ-W.

<sup>318</sup> *AJHR*, 1917, C-2, p. 47; see also Walter Greening to W.H. Baker (Director, Thames School of Mines), 24 May 1916, 20 June 1916, 8 July 1916, 14 August 1916, Inward Correspondence File 1907-1929, School of Mines Archives, Thames.

<sup>319</sup> A. & G. Price to Walter Greening, 23 July 1916, Letterbook 1915-1916, p. 412, A. & G. Price Archives, Thames.

and concentrates were sent to Thames for testing in September that year,<sup>320</sup> but a Waiorongomai correspondent's expectation of the mines being 'likely to commence operations at an early date'<sup>321</sup> was hopelessly optimistic. In February 1917, when applying for the suspension of labour conditions, Greening stated that McLean was still in London attempting to raise capital.<sup>322</sup> No doubt he was, but he had other priorities, labouring 'long and earnestly at work which had as its object the furthering of the Empire's interests'.<sup>323</sup> Greening told the warden that the syndicate had spent £8,000 since acquiring the property. 'Large scheme is recommended. £30,000 needed. Little chance of getting capital or men. We paid 17/- to £1 a day and then they wouldn't stay.... Been driving a low level. Driven 2,000ft and 80ft more to drive'. He was granted 12 months' suspension of labour conditions.<sup>324</sup> Greening, now described as the caretaker of Hardy's Mines, informed Paul that, when the war was over, the low level would be extended to intersect the main lode where, it was believed, Hardy had 'left good ore in the bottom of a winze sunk from the upper level'.<sup>325</sup>

During 1917, two of the wealthiest members of the syndicate, Donnelly and Ormond, died.<sup>326</sup> In the following year, McLean, still in London, said he would not try to raise capital until after the war had ended.<sup>327</sup> Greening was by 1918 the only employee, there was no mining machinery, and it was claimed not to be 'possible to get men to go to site of mine at present' because there were no longer any houses for married men near McLean's level.<sup>328</sup> The fact that the syndicate objected to any removal of the tramway rails, continued to employ Greening to keep the levels open, and regularly paid the rents and other mining dues convinced the mining inspector that they still had confidence in their property.<sup>329</sup> The former tramway manager probably expressed local opinion when he told the Minister that they were 'only holding the

---

<sup>320</sup> Walter Greening to W.H. Baker, 18 September 1916, Assay Correspondence 1916-1920, School of Mines Archives, Thames.

<sup>321</sup> Waiorongomai Correspondent, *Te Aroha News*, 1 November 1916, p. 3.

<sup>322</sup> Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1917, 2/1917, BCDG 11289/1a, ANZ-A.

<sup>323</sup> *Observer*, 12 January 1927, p. 4.

<sup>324</sup> Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1917, 2/1917, BCDG 11289/1a, ANZ-A.

<sup>325</sup> Matthew Paul to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 19 May 1917, Mines Department, MD 1, 21/2/4, ANZ-W.

<sup>326</sup> Death Certificates of George Prior Donnelly, 9 August 1917, 1917/41; John Davies Ormond, 1917/6774, BDM; *Observer*, 13 October 1917, p. 4.

<sup>327</sup> Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1918, 21/1918, BCDG 11289/1a, ANZ-A.

<sup>328</sup> Te Aroha Warden's Court, Applications 1918, 2, 21/1918, BCDG 11289/1a, ANZ-A.

<sup>329</sup> Walter Greening to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 24 May 1918 (telegram); Matthew Paul to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 29 May 1918, Mines Department, MD 1, 21/2/4, ANZ-W.

Claims with the hopes that someone will find something and enable them to sell out'.<sup>330</sup> Some prospecting by others was indeed continuing,<sup>331</sup> which could have fueled such hopes.

### THE FINAL YEARS

In April 1919, Greening was instructed to obtain men to clean out the winze sunk from the Colonist low level because, reputedly, it followed 'a run of highly payable ore'. Should any gold be found, a connection would be made with McLean's level.<sup>332</sup> (When the winze was cleaned out in 1922, it was discovered that, 'like all other reports of this kind', the belief that Hardy had left good gold there was untrue.<sup>333</sup>) No work was done in the mine during 1919, but by the beginning of the following year the warden 'expected that capital will shortly be available to develop the low level'.<sup>334</sup>

In April 1920, Greening informed the warden that experts, unnamed, had reported that £25,000 was needed for 'complete development underground', namely extending McLean's level, 'now in 2000 feet, and driving upon and opening up the three lodes' it had cut. The cost of extending it to the Premier reef would 'not be small', and much retimbering was 'required for safety' in it. The other owners were still awaiting McLean's return from England, 'he being the most powerful member of the Syndicate and being intent on the development of the mine'. Only by working on a large scale would it be payable.<sup>335</sup> Paul, being aware of the syndicate's difficulties, was sympathetic. McLean's level had been driven because of 'highly payable assay values' in several places in the floor of the level above it but had had to cut through very hard country and had not reached its goal before money ran out and the war had prevented the raising of any more capital. The Premier reef at this lower level

should be well worthy of a trial, but owing to the hard nature of the country, and the great length of this tunnel, an adequate ventilating and rock drilling plant must be installed. Owing to the high cost ruling for machinery of this kind, and the difficulty in transit to the mine, it would run into a large sum of money.

---

<sup>330</sup> J.S. Hill to Minister of Mines, 10 June 1918, Mines Department, MD 1, 21/2/4, ANZ-W.

<sup>331</sup> *AJHR*, 1918, C-2, p. 31.

<sup>332</sup> Matthew Paul to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 15 April 1919, Mines Department, MD 1, 21/2/4, ANZ-W.

<sup>333</sup> Matthew Paul to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 22 September 1922, Mines Department, MD 1, 23/4/54, ANZ-W.

<sup>334</sup> Matthew Paul to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, n.d., *AJHR*, 1920, C-2, p. 32.

<sup>335</sup> Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1920, 6/1920, BCDG 11289/1a, ANZ-A.

This mine could not be profitably developed using hand power.<sup>336</sup>

In July, Hardy's Mines along with another company contributed £250 towards repairing the tramway,<sup>337</sup> and in the following month it was reported that Greening had been instructed 'to put on more men and work the claims again'. The *Te Aroha News* argued that as the shareholders were 'wealthy Hawkes Bay men we may expect to see some money spent here'.<sup>338</sup> In September, Greening informed the warden that McLean was expected back in New Zealand within six months. In England he had 'been in touch with mining and financial authorities likely to be interested' and had 'reports and other documents transmitted to him from time to time for submission in London with a view of obtaining capital'.<sup>339</sup>

As nothing came of these hopes, in March 1921 Paul recommended that no more protection be granted.<sup>340</sup> When suspension of labour conditions was again granted, in June, the minister warned that this was 'on the distinct understanding that at the end of the period granted, the labour conditions must be complied with'. Williams declared that it was not possible to raise the necessary £25,000 because two of the owners had died and as the trustees of their estates had no power to invest in mine development it must be 'left to the surviving owners to introduce Capital or obtain further Capital'. All the owners were 'seriously affected by the present financial conditions' and had no spare money to invest 'as they have to carry on their own immediate business affairs'.<sup>341</sup>

In June that year, Paul reported that Greening had recommended that any money available should be spent in extending McLean's level. This was 'not a mine where a prospector or tributer' had 'any chance of striking a bonanza' as the refractory ore required special treatment.<sup>342</sup> In November, Williams asked for another suspension of labour conditions, stating that they had spent over £10,000 but could not raise any more funds.<sup>343</sup> Asked for his opinion, Paul wrote that 'practically no work has been done

---

<sup>336</sup> Matthew Paul to Warden, 27 April 1920, Mines Department, MD 1, 23/4/54, ANZ-W.

<sup>337</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 7 July 1920, p. 2.

<sup>338</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 16 August 1920, p. 2.

<sup>339</sup> Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1920, 13/1920, BCDG 11289/1a, ANZ-A.

<sup>340</sup> Matthew Paul to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 10 March 1921, Mines Department, MD 1, 21/2/4, ANZ-W.

<sup>341</sup> Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1921, 20/1921, BCDG 11289/1a, ANZ-A.

<sup>342</sup> Matthew Paul to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 4 June 1921, Mines Department, MD 1, 23/4/54, ANZ-W.

<sup>343</sup> Declaration of E.H. Williams, 18 November 1921, Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1921, 45/1921, BCDG 1129/1a, ANZ-A.

since the War period'. Parts of the Hero lode exposed in McLean's level were payable, if a suitable plant was built. As there was only a short distance to drive to strike the Premier lode, he considered that at least four men should be employed to test the latter. 'As there is a possibility of the quartz containing values which would assist the Directors in securing the capital required to develop this Mine; in the event of the ore proving valueless they could then abandon this claim, and give some other mining speculators a chance of raising capital to work it'.<sup>344</sup> After Williams discussed their problems with the under-secretary, a 12-months' suspension of labour conditions was granted.<sup>345</sup>

During all this time, Hardy's Mines was paying about £100 annually in goldfields dues,<sup>346</sup> and £49 in rent to the Thames High School.<sup>347</sup> Late in 1922, a prospect of obtaining a return for all these unproductive payments appeared when a mining engineer offered to assist to sell this property, along with the adjoining Bendigo mine, owned by James Alexander Pond,<sup>348</sup> to Australian investors.<sup>349</sup> This engineer was Charles Norman Taylor; in 1931 the under-secretary informed an investor that he had known him 'for some years' and that he could 'be relied upon to act fairly'.<sup>350</sup> If Taylor could find good prospects, he would be able to raise capital from William Addison Freeman, of the 'well-known mining firm of Sydney and Malaya',<sup>351</sup> who had commissioned him to look for suitable properties.<sup>352</sup> (Taylor was involved, in the 1920

---

<sup>344</sup> Matthew Paul to Warden, 29 November 1921, Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1921, 45/1921, BCDG 11289/1a, ANZ-A.

<sup>345</sup> E.H. Williams to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 3 March 1922, Mines Department, MD 1, 23/4/54, ANZ-W; Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1921, 45/1921, BCDG 11289/1a, ANZ-A.

<sup>346</sup> Walter Greening to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 22 August 1922, Mines Department, MD 1, 21/2/4, ANZ-W.

<sup>347</sup> For example, Thames High School Board of Governors, Minutes of Meeting of 27 July 1921, High School Archives, Thames.

<sup>348</sup> See paper on his life.

<sup>349</sup> C.N. Taylor to Matthew Paul, 12 December 1922, Inspector of Mines, BBDO 18634, A902, M6, ANZ-A.

<sup>350</sup> Under-Secretary, Mines Department, to Harry Milner, 26 March 1931, Mines Department, MD 1, 5.4/91, No. 1, ANZ-W; for personal details, see Death Certificate of Charles Norman Taylor, 20 February 1958, 1958/34840, BDM.

<sup>351</sup> See Arthur Corbett and G.P. Walsh, 'Ambrose William Freeman and William Addison Freeman', *Australian Dictionary of Biography: vol. 8: 1891-1931* (Melbourne, 1981), pp. 583-584.

<sup>352</sup> C.N. Taylor to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 26 October 1922, Mines Department, MD 1, 23/4/54, ANZ-W.

and 1930s, with McLean and Ormond in a syndicate that prospected for oil.<sup>353</sup>) In order to assist in making a sale, Hardy's Mines agreed to complete McLean's level, after which Taylor's 'friends in Australia were to send their Engineer over to report'.<sup>354</sup> In August, Taylor was asked to drive 100 feet to strike the Vulcan reef; as this would cost £1,200, he was told to request a government subsidy.<sup>355</sup> Consulted by his superiors, Paul stated that McLean's level was 30 feet from the Vulcan reef, and that the syndicate proposed to drive a total distance of 300 feet along the latter to junction with the Premier lode underneath where payable gold had once been found. Paul had found the level to be in good order to within 100 feet of the face, where it had caved in with water backing up. The tram rails and air pipes were 'surprisingly well-preserved, due to the absence of destructive minerals in the water'. The waterpower available was adequate to provide ventilation. As the leading shareholders were 'wealthy men, who have been allowed to hold this claim for at least 9 years without doing any work', he considered that 'to prove their faith in it they should find the money required to do this work'. Although he recommended not granting the subsidy requested,<sup>356</sup> the Mines Department decided to offer one of £130, at a rate of 8s 8d per foot for 300 feet.<sup>357</sup> Taylor's response was that this sum would be of little help and requested ten shillings for every pound spent, to be informed that this was not possible.<sup>358</sup> Having only sufficient funds to drive another 150 feet, Taylor requested Ernest Feltus Adams to survey the planned extension.<sup>359</sup>

On 2 September, the *Te Aroha News* reported that Greening had informed it that 'an early start with the mine' would be made.<sup>360</sup> Then, on 25 November, it reported that Greening was leaving for Auckland shortly, having left Hardy's Mines, no reason being

---

<sup>353</sup> See Mines Department, MD 1, 5/4/3, ANZ-W; *Gisborne Times*, 25 June 1925, p. 2; *Poverty Bay Herald*, 16 June 1927, p. 12.

<sup>354</sup> C.N. Taylor to Matthew Paul, 12 December 1922, Inspector of Mines, BBDO 18634, A902, M6, ANZ-W.

<sup>355</sup> E.H. Williams to C.N. Taylor, 17 August 1922, Mines Department, MD 1, 23/4/54, ANZ-W.

<sup>356</sup> 'Proposed New Work', attached to Matthew Paul to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 22 September 1922, Mines Department, MD 1, 23/4/54, ANZ-W.

<sup>357</sup> Under-Secretary, Mines Department, to C.N. Taylor, 6 October 1922, Mines Department, MD 1, 23/4/54; Memorandum of 14 February 1926, Mines Department, MD 1A, 8/52, ANZ-W.

<sup>358</sup> C.N. Taylor to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 26 October 1922; Under-Secretary, Mines Department, to Minister of Mines, 26 October 1922, Mines Department, Mines Department, MD 1, 23/4/54, ANZ-W.

<sup>359</sup> C.N. Taylor to E.H. Williams, 3 March 1923, Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1923, 9/23, BCDG 11289/1a, ANZ-A.

<sup>360</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 2 September 1922, p. 2.

given for why his employment had been terminated.<sup>361</sup> He left with an unfortunate legacy, dying ten years later of miners' complaint.<sup>362</sup> He also left with an unfortunate reputation, Taylor informing Paul that the reason for his sudden departure was that he had claimed that another 80 feet of driving would cut the Vulcan reef at its junction with the main reef, but Taylor, who 'had reason to doubt the accuracy of Greening's report', had employed Adams to survey the mine. Adams' plan revealed 'that the distance to the Vulcan Junction was more like 400 feet and we also found that the level was being driven back to the Main Reef and was not being driven to the Junction as imagined'.<sup>363</sup> As driving the level would now be much more expensive than anticipated, the planned extension was abandoned and the government subsidy was cancelled.<sup>364</sup>

Taylor, who had 'spent a great deal of time on this proposition', was 'prepared to introduce it to my friends in Australia'. Requiring more protection to allow time for negotiations, told Paul that, whereas in the past during protection 'no attempt was made to form a larger Company, I can assure you that I will not waste any time over the matter'.<sup>365</sup> His March letter to Williams had names removed before it was copied for the warden's consideration:

Acting upon your instructions I then proceeded to endeavour to secure the additional Capital, and up to the present time I have been constantly working to this end.

Mr .... who is associated with Mr ... went into the matter with me here, and he also went exhaustively into the matter of ore treatment with Mr .... of Auckland.

As a result of these negotiations, I am leaving for Sydney to-day and expect to return to N.Z. accompanied by one of Mr .... engineers, and after reporting upon the Mine I hope that arrangements can be made to recommence the Mining operations at an early date.

I think the Mining Inspector will agree with me that there is little prospect of finding capital in N.Z. to re-open the Mine, and if Australian Investors of standing and experience can be induced to join us there is every prospect that the Mines will again be operated in the near future.

---

<sup>361</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 25 November 1922, p. 1.

<sup>362</sup> Death Certificate of Walter Greening, 22 December 1932, 1932/11453, BDM.

<sup>363</sup> C.N. Taylor to Matthew Paul, 12 December 1922, Inspector of Mines, BBDO 18634, A902, M6; see E.F. Adams to C.N. Taylor, 23 November 1922, Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1923, 9/1923, BCDG 11289/1a, ANZ-A.

<sup>364</sup> Memorandum by Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 27 May 1925, Inspector of Mines, BBDO A902, M6, ANZ-A.

<sup>365</sup> C.N. Taylor to Matthew Paul, 12 December 1922, Inspector of Mines, BBDO 18634. A902, M6, ANZ-A.

It will be understood by the Warden that we have, and are being put to a good deal of expense, and if we succeed in interesting Mr ....., Mining operations will be conducted under more favourable conditions than could be hoped for if we are to carry on as a small Syndicate with inadequate funds for the work in hand....

There is every chance that I will be able to arrange for the re-opening of the Mine within the next two months.<sup>366</sup>

In the light of this letter, Williams applied for continued suspension of labour conditions while the owners negotiated with a Sydney ‘capitalist’, unnamed, who was ‘favourably disposed towards investing money’ but would first ‘send his expert to report’.<sup>367</sup> Pond, who claimed there was a good prospect of floating his Cadman, Bendigo, and Bonanza mines in conjunction with the adjoining Hardy’s Mines, went to Sydney in May to arrange for the inspection of these properties in the hope of selling them to the unnamed company,<sup>368</sup> presumably Freeman and Company.

Misfortune for the vendors struck when Arthur Herbert Vivian Morgan, of the Thames School of Mines, who later became the director of the Waihi School of Mines,<sup>369</sup> took samples from McLean’s level proving that former assays ‘were misleading’.<sup>370</sup> Fifteen samples were taken in January 1924, the highest value per ton being 22 grains per ton valued at 4s 7d, the next highest producing 2s 10d.<sup>371</sup> Morgan’s accompanying report noted that these assays revealed

the complete absence of any payable ore exposed in these workings. Neither precious nor base metals exist in anything like commercially valuable quantities, and it appears as if in the section of the mine under consideration the enriched ore bearing zone near the surface has given place in depth to a comparatively poor or barren zone. The past history of the field has shown that all the ore shoots, which yielded payable ore in the shallow workings, became unprofitable as lower levels were reached. Whether another zone of

---

<sup>366</sup> C.N. Taylor to E.H. Williams, 3 March 1923, Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Mining Applications 1923, 9/1923, BCDG 11289/1a, ANZ-A.

<sup>367</sup> Declaration of E.H. Williams, 10 March 1923, Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Mining Applications 1923, 9/1923, BCDG 11289/1a, ANZ-A.

<sup>368</sup> Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Mining Applications 1923, 43/1923, BCDG 11289/1a, ANZ-A.

<sup>369</sup> See *Thames Electoral Roll, 1931*, p. 128.

<sup>370</sup> Matthew Paul to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 11 August 1926, Mines Department, MD 1, 23/4/54, ANZ-W.

<sup>371</sup> A.H.V. Morgan, Assay Sheet, Hero Lode, No. 5 Level, Hardy’s Mines, Waiorongomai, n.d. [January 1924], Mines Department, MD 1, 23/4/54, ANZ-W.

secondary enrichment exists below this barren zone is at present an open question.<sup>372</sup>

In the light of this report, and because the distance required to be driven was much longer than earlier anticipated, Taylor ‘decided that he could not recommend the People he represented, to spend the money required to open up this Mine’.<sup>373</sup> He then turned his attention to exploring for oil in Taranaki, being managing director of Moturoa Oil Fields Ltd, formed in 1930, in which Williams was a provisional director.<sup>374</sup>

This failure to sell their property led the owners to abandon it in early 1924.<sup>375</sup> The last relics of these unsuccessful companies were removed in 1926, when the miners’ huts were pulled down and the timber and iron were brought down the tramway.<sup>376</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The local newspaper did not record the syndicate’s abandonment of Waiorongomai. As it had long hoped for a very different outcome, any report would have had to explain the realities that had led to this outcome. The lessons that the mines had been worked out were not learnt by others, as shown when Malcolm Hardy and

---

<sup>372</sup> A.H.V. Morgan, ‘Report on “Hero” Section – Hardy’s Mines, Waiorongomai’, n.d. [January 1924], Mines Department, MD 1, 23/4/54, ANZ-W.

<sup>373</sup> Matthew Paul to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 10 June 1925, Mines Department, MD 1, 23/4/54, ANZ-W.

<sup>374</sup> Under-Secretary, Mines Department, to Harry Milner, 26 March 1931, Mines Department, MD 1, 5/4/91, Part 1; E.J. Scoble to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 13 May 1935; C.N. Taylor to Inspector of Mines, Reefton, 17 April 1936; C.N. Taylor to Accountant, Mines Department, 30 September 1936; C.N. Taylor to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 2 April 1937, Mines Department, MD 1, 5/4/106; Mines Department, MD 1, 12/1/11, ANZ-W.

<sup>375</sup> Thames High School Board of Governors, Minutes of Meeting of 24 April 1924, High School Archives, Thames; Piako County Council, Minutes of Meetings held on 28 April 1924, 19 May 1924, Matamata-Piako District Council Archives, Te Aroha; Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Register of Mining Privileges 1901-1910, folios 1-4, 6, BBAV 11500/1a; Register of Applications 1921-1934, Hearings of 7 May 1924, 17 June 1924, BBAV 11505/6b, ANZ-A.

<sup>376</sup> Matthew Paul to O.G. Thornton, 25 June 1926, Inspector of Mines, BBDO 18634, A902, MM138, ANZ-A; *Te Aroha News*, 22 July 1926, p. 5.

others attempted to revive the goldfield in the 1930s.<sup>377</sup> In that decade, investors repeated the same mistakes, being both under-capitalized and unwilling to accept that the Waiorongomai goldfield was finished.

### *Appendix*

*Figure 1:* G. Johnson, ‘Entrance to Hardy’s Mine in the Ranges at Waiorongomai’, *Auckland Weekly News*, 24 June 1909, Supplement, p. 2, C16, 703, Auckland War Memorial Museum – Tamaki Paenga Hira; used with permission.

*Figure 2:* Portal of McLean’s level, n.d. [1940s?], David Calder Hardy Collection; used with permission.

*Figure 3:* Walter Greening, ‘Plan of Proposed New Work, Hardy’s Mines, Waiorongomai’, September 1922, Inspector of Mines, BBDO 18634, A902, M6, ANZ-A [Archives New Zealand/Te Rua Mahara o te Kawanatanga]; used with permission.

*Figure 4:* Plan of assays made by Hugh Morgan, 1924, attached to J.F. Downey to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 7 August 1933, Mines Department, MD 1, 23/4/54, ANZ-W [Archives New Zealand The Department of Internal Affairs Te Tari Taiwhenua]; used with permission.

---

<sup>377</sup> See papers on Malcolm Hardy and on prospectors and investors in the Te Aroha Mining District in the 1930s.



*Figure 1: G. Johnson, 'Entrance to Hardy's Mine in the Ranges at Waiorongomai', Auckland Weekly News, 24 June 1909, Supplement, p. 2, C16, 703, Auckland War Memorial Museum – Tamaki Paenga Hira; used with permission.*



*Figure 2:* Portal of McLean's level, n.d. [1940s?], David Calder Hardy Collection; used with permission.

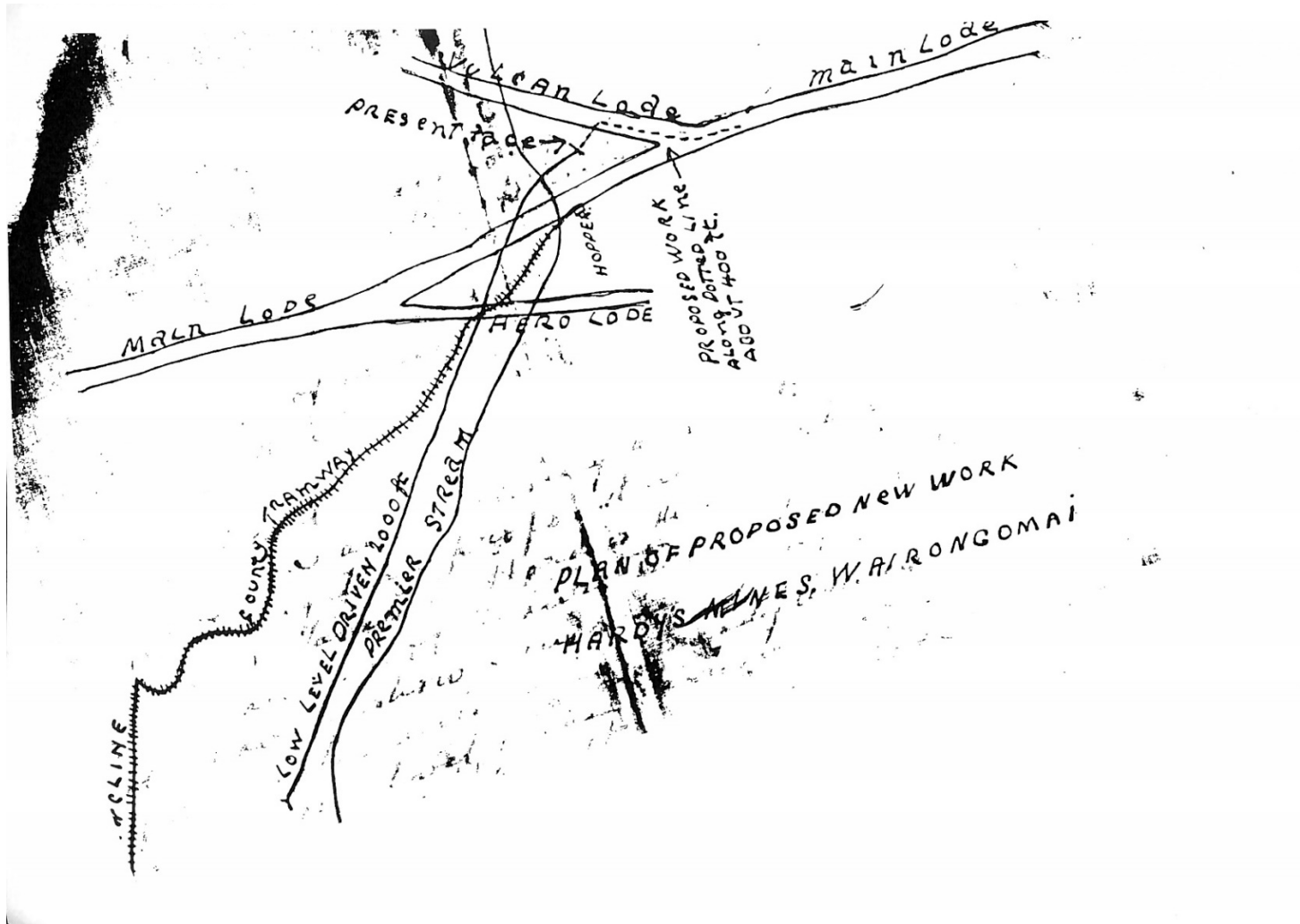
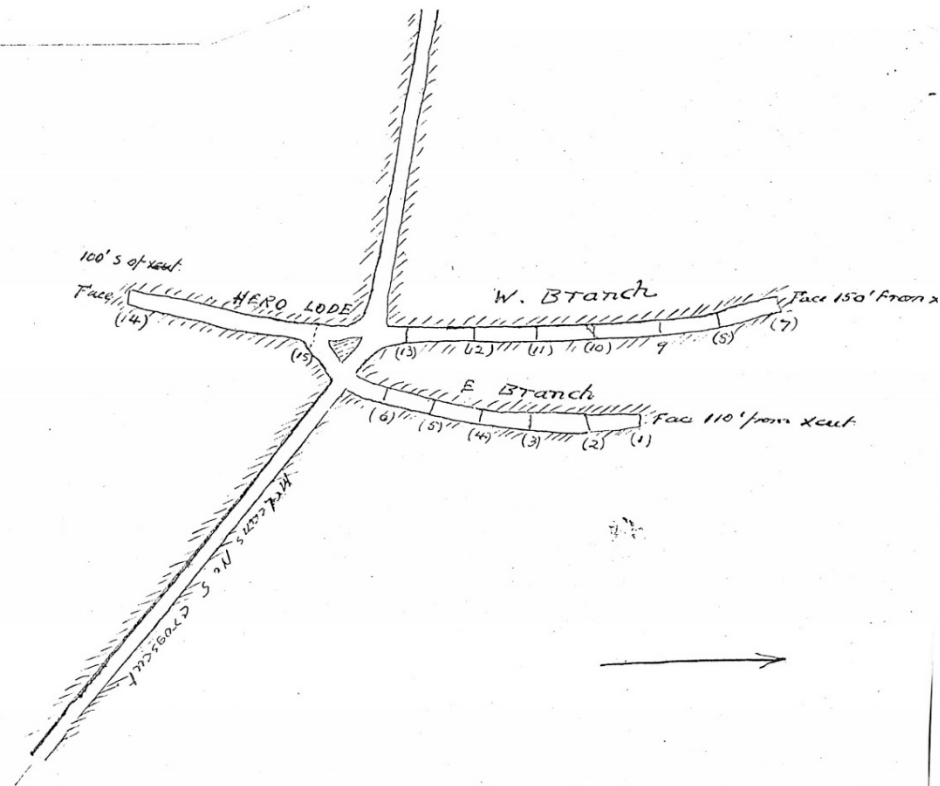


Figure 3: Walter Greening, 'Plan of Proposed New Work, Hardy's Mines, Waiorongomai', September 1922, Inspector of Mines, BBDO 18634, A902, M6, ANZ-A [Archives New Zealand/Te Rua Mahara o te Kawanatanga]; used with permission.



*Figure 4:* Plan of assays made by Hugh Morgan, 1924, attached to J.F. Downey to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 7 August 1933, Mines Department, MD 1, 23/4/54, ANZ-W [Archives New Zealand The Department of Internal Affairs Te Tari Taiwhenua]; used with permission.