

FINANCIAL STRUGGLES AND (RARE) SUCCESSES OF
MINERS IN GENERAL AND AT TE AROHA IN PARTICULAR

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FINANCING PROSPECTORS AND MINERS IN GENERAL AND AT TE AROHA IN PARTICULAR

Abstract: *Miners required capital to develop their mines, but being dependent for this on investors, usually small local businessmen, they often found the latter made more from mining than they did. Faced with the costs of extracting and treating ore, miners of small means sought sleeping partners, creating opportunities for exploitation by both sides. As all interests had to be worked in the early days of mining, all shareholders had either to do physical mining themselves or pay for others to work on their behalf; examples are provided of how this worked out in practice, including when those who did not fulfil their part of the bargain being sued. Storekeepers commonly provided provisions to prospecting and mining parties with the expectation of holding interests in profitable mines. Occasionally the use of dummies hid the names of investors.*

To obtain finance, sometimes miners made exaggerated claims about the value of their ore, and examples are given of when their claims were deliberately fraudulent, with mines being salted or unreliable assays enticing the unwary. By the late nineteenth century, as gold mining faded, prospecting associations were formed whereby a few experienced prospectors were employed, a system that could defraud both investors and those they employed.

Examples are provided of miners working alone and with little capital, relying on assistance from sleeping partners and, in some cases, seeking government aid as well. As illustrated, many miners frittered money away on small and unprofitable mines. Because of the insufficiency of capital, it was common to obtain protection for mines, leading to complaints of shepherding and of locking up ground.

Prospectors complained that their discoveries made others rich, but some prospectors and miners exploited investors (who in many cases should be described as speculators) in a system that, at its worst, encouraged such exploitation.

REQUIRING CAPITAL

According to one newspaper, 'mining more than any other industry' required 'patience and a large expenditure of capital before it arrives at the

payable stage'.¹ Even registering a claim was expensive, estimated at from £30 to £40 in the 1890s, which often forced a miner with no financial backing into the hands of a city 'shark' who commonly took 'most of the property for the assistance rendered'.² For instance, when Edwin Barnes Walker, a large landowner who farmed at Mona Vale near Cambridge,³ applied on behalf of a syndicate for the Gentle Annie at Stoney Creek in 1895, the costs totaled £45.⁴

In 1907, an experienced miner described the travails of a prospector who made an apparently valuable find:

He returns from the bush highly excited and full of confidence in the value of his find. He brings with him a number of samples, which he causes to be assayed. Being picked stone they usually show fairly high results. The heavier part of his task still remains to be done, however, for he has yet to induce others to believe what he himself knows to be the truth. He finds that the people whom he approaches for financial support may be divided into three classes – viz, (1) Those “who have been had before,” (2) those “who don't mean to be had if they can help it,” and (3) those “who mean to get a bit of their own back.” He may go farther afield; but, of course, among those to whom he is unknown he fares no better. He had many disappointments, and one cannot wonder if with each rebuff his story grows until the original pennyweights of value become ounces, and the inches of width become feet, until in fact the whole thing is too much for any one to swallow. Sometimes he desists long before this point is reached and retires into obscurity, there to await the advent of a “boom,” or – what is in his estimation equally probable – of a mining speculator with honesty, intelligence, and money. If, on the other hand, he succeeds in finding a backer he is usually but little the wealthier, for often the trained man of

¹ Editorial, *Waikato Times*, 2 March 1886, p. 2.

² *The Resources of New Zealand*, ed. G.E. Alderton (Auckland, 1898), p. 175.

³ See *Descriptive Handbook to the Waikato* (Hamilton, 1880), p. 68; *New Zealand Herald*, 23 November 1893, p. 5, 8 February 1898, p. 5; *Waikato Argus*, 10 February 1898, p. 2, 24 November 1898, p. 2; Eric Beer and Alwyn Gascoigne, *Plough of the Pakeha* (Cambridge, 1975), pp. 127-130, 152-158, 172, 221, 248, 253, 264, 273-279, 307-309.

⁴ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1895, 16/1895, BBAV 11582/4a, ANZ-A.

business with whom he is dealing prove altogether too clever for him, and he loses everything.⁵

A leading mine manager and mining commentator, John McCombie,⁶ wrote that, without capital, it was ‘impossible to start any quartz mining enterprise in New Zealand, and carry it on to a successful issue’. Capital was needed not only to float the company but also ‘to weather the storm of ill success that invariably accompanies all such ventures at the outset’, making the capitalist ‘an indispensable wheel in the machinery’.⁷ In 1902, responding to criticism of investors, he wrote that no prospectors who had located gold within the past ten years had commenced work ‘right away, without seeking for assistance’. ‘As soon as a miner, or prospector, discovers a reef on or near the surface, so soon does he start for Auckland or the next nearest township, in order to find money for lease, survey, and development. If his show is worthy of notice the miner never appeals in vain to the capitalist’.⁸

This paper considers the struggles of both lone miners and small parties backed by sleeping partners to work their claims, mainly using examples from Te Aroha, Waiorongomai, and Tui. Sometimes miners had so little money that they were unable even to acquire the claims they applied for, as when Charles Jenkins⁹ in 1882 withdrew his application for the forfeited Lark, not having ‘sufficient funds to go on with the purchase’.¹⁰ According to the *Handbook of New Zealand Mines* of 1887, machinery needed to work Waiorongomai’s reefs was so expensive that it was ‘almost impossible for men with small means to work their holdings to advantage’. Capitalists able to spend large sums had ‘a much better chance of

⁵ James Williams, second essay in *Three Prize Essays on the Present Condition and Future Prospects of the Mineral Resources of New Zealand, and the Best Means of Fostering their Development* (Wellington, 1907), p. 179.

⁶ See paper on Billy Nicholl.

⁷ ‘Aboriginal’, ‘Quartz-Mining and Capital’, *Auckland Weekly News*, 14 April 1894, p. 37.

⁸ ‘Aboriginal’, ‘The Mining Industry: The Relations of Capital and Labour’, *Thames Star*, 13 September 1902, Supplement, p. 2.

⁹ See *Thames Advertiser*, Warden’s Court, 27 April 1876, p. 3, Warden’s Court, 20 April 1877, p. 3, Magistrate’s Court, 21 July 1877, p. 3, 19 July 1880, p. 3, 12 January 1881, p. 3, 14 April 1881, p. 3.

¹⁰ Charles Jenkins to Warden, 4 July 1882, Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Plaints 1882, BBAV 11572/1a, ANZ-A.

succeeding'. The principal reason for the field 'retrograding instead of advancing has, to a great extent, been due to the fact that individual miners have been unable to perform work requiring considerable capital'.¹¹

All the examples cited of miners and investors were men who held interests in the Te Aroha district.

SLEEPING PARTNERS

Miners required non-miners to finance both prospecting and mining, as an observer explained. With the assistance of a storekeeper, 'whose payment has often to come out of the profits of the yet unproved claim, or who is recompensed for his risk by a share', a party of miners would 'embark on a speculation' such as driving a tunnel which might take 'one or two years to accomplish. Possibly at the termination of this time the ground may prove too poor to work to advantage', meaning that 'the miners lose their labour, and the store-keeper has another bad debt to add to his list; on the other hand, a rich "patch" may result in returns which amply justify the expenditure and risk'.¹²

'During the 1860s, it became customary for groups of about eight miners to form an associated with an equal number of Auckland investors, who supplied the capital. The miners worked for a wage of 30s a week until the mine became productive', whereupon they mined for a share of the profits.¹³ Before companies were formed, 'every purchaser into a claim had to assist in the working of it, either by his own labour or by the employment of others to do it'.¹⁴ The latter were known as sleeping partners, and their provision of capital was vital for the development of mines because working miners had few financial resources. Non-miners were 'frequently' offered shares in prospecting parties and claims because miners needed their financial contributions.¹⁵

¹¹ *Handbook of New Zealand Mines* (Wellington, 1887), p. 327.

¹² George J. Binns, 'Mining in New Zealand', *Transactions of the Federated Mining Engineers*, vol. 3 (1891-1892), p. 645.

¹³ David Grant, *Bulls, Bears and Elephants: A history of the New Zealand Stock Exchange* (Wellington, 1997), p. 28.

¹⁴ 'Mundic', 'A Retrospect of the Thames Goldfield', *Observer*, Christmas Number 1893, p. 18.

¹⁵ For example, evidence of Gerald O'Halloran, 'The Tairua Investigation', *AJHR*, 1875, I-1, p. 36.

In 1883 it was noted that the only man to profit long-term from the Shotover find in the early days of Thames was ‘a shrewd bank clerk in the Union Bank of Australia, who bought an interest – a small one – from [W.A.] Hunt in his fourth share of the claim’. By this date the former clerk, Joseph Howard,¹⁶ was a ‘bloated capitalist’, whilst Hunt, ‘on whose face Joe was wont most assiduously to watch the sunshine and the shadow’, had filed as bankrupt.¹⁷ He had bought a quarter share for £100 in cash and agreement that he would receive £100 from the first crushing; this crushing produced over 12,000 ounces of gold.¹⁸ Fifty years later, it was stated that Howard, then Auckland manager of the Union Bank, ‘purely as a gesture in the interests of progress, and certainly not in the hope of attaining the great riches afterwards realised from this source, “grub-staked” the prospectors’.¹⁹ A journalist claimed that Howard had wanted to get out of his involvement with Hunt, but by missing a boat could not do so, resulting in his share, bought before the bonanza was struck, rewarding him with £20,000.²⁰

An example of a sleeping partner not being rewarded was John Lynch, a publican and farmer.²¹ A surveyor recalled his involvement with Coromandel mining:

At one time when matters were dull on the field, John Lynch, a well-known hotelkeeper, and others, kept half-a-dozen men employed for six months driving into a claim which they held on the ridge between the wharf and the town. After spending many hundreds of pounds on the venture, and finding nothing of value, they reluctantly abandoned the claim. In later years the Hauraki Company started driving upon a specimen leader which they found nearer the wharf, and obtained rich returns. The company’s operations eventually brought them to the vicinity of Lynch and party’s workings, and proved that had their tunnel been

¹⁶ See R.C.J. Stone, *James Dilworth* (Auckland, 1995), pp. 192-195, 198, 200, 206, 228.

¹⁷ *Te Aroha News*, 6 October 1883, p. 2.

¹⁸ ‘An Old Californian Miner’, *History and Description of the Thames Goldfields* (Auckland, 1869), p. 18.

¹⁹ Letter from ‘Brian Boru’, *Observer*, 25 August 1932, p. 4.

²⁰ *Thames Star*, 30 July 1927, p. 5.

²¹ See *Auckland Weekly News*, 31 July 1913, p. 68; *Coromandel County News*, 1 August 1913, p. 3.

continued for 15ft, the leader and the gold would have been struck many years before.²²

Many sleeping partners obtained few rewards or even financial ruin. John Leydon, a prominent auctioneer,²³ claimed his 1870 bankruptcy was caused by 'having entered into mining Speculations on the Thames Goldfields and having paid large sums of money for such interests and wages to miners for working the same, such interests proved unremunerative, in consequence whereof I have been compelled to relinquish the said interests'.²⁴

Henry Dunbar Johnson, for a time a Pakeha Maori in Ohinemuri who experienced the early years of the Thames and Karangahake goldfields,²⁵ in 1910 recalled the system of what he called 'sleeping half-shares' on the Thames field:

Sometimes sleeping half-shares were purchased for a very small consideration, on one occasion I believe for a pair of boots, on another it is understood for a miner's right, and it has even been suggested that one thirsty soul parted with his privileges for a pint of beer. Sleeping half-shareholders had nothing more to pay towards the actual working of the mine than a share of expenses in connection with the tools, candles, and other similar accessories; and the working half had to supply the labour for the whole claim. It did not take men long to find they had loaded themselves with Sinbad the Sailor, and they used all sorts of means to shake him off, the only really effective way to abandon the claim; but before proceeding to that step, they would in many cases they would in many cases fritter away time; and there was one particular instance where a party pegged out on ground to the north of the Waiotahi stream and made pretence of sinking a shaft. Instead, however, as was afterwards discovered, they amused themselves with "draw-poker," and as soon as they could, without swindling the shareholders in too barefaced manner, they threw up the claim. Later on, as the evils of the sleeping half-share system became more apparent, the Crown refused to allow any such interests to be registered in the Warden's office.

²² Peter Cheal, cited by F.W. Weston, 'Thames Reminiscences', *New Zealand Herald*, 5 April 1923, p. 9.

²³ See *New Zealand Herald*, 8 April 1927, p. 12.

²⁴ District Court, Thames, Bankruptcy Files, Grahamstown, 1870-1875, hearing of 14 October 1870, BACL 14471/1a, ANZ-A.

²⁵ See paper on Lavinia and Henry Dunbar Johnson.

If this party had sunk the shaft they would have struck ‘the celebrated Manukau Reef’. Johnson believed that miners took on sleeping partners ‘only under compulsion of necessity. The sleeping partner imagined he was getting a good thing, practically for nothing, but the system soon worked its own cure, as the miner took the earliest opportunity of ridding himself of the incubus’.²⁶ As Johnson himself was not recorded as having any sleeping shares, his knowledge was either hearsay or derived from informal arrangements he entered into.

An examination of agreements made in the early days of Thames and later indicates that the so-called ‘incubus’ was necessary if the mines were to be worked before companies were formed, and that the cost to the sleeping partners was greater than the examples cited in Johnson’s reminiscence. The arrangements were based on the requirement that all shareholders in the small claims either worked in the mine or paid someone to work their share. For instance, during the Te Aroha rush Benjamin Rees (possibly later a coal miner in New South Wales)²⁷ was one of eight owners of the Morning Light, but after 16 days his share was forfeited to a miner because he ‘had not been represented’ in working it.²⁸ As many investors were not miners and had shares in more than one mine, it was impossible for them to work all (or in many cases, any) of their interests. For instance, Alexander Hogg, an early goldfields storekeeper,²⁹ in late 1869 had two shares in one Coromandel claim and was the sole owner of another, which, being four men’s ground in extent, required four miners to man it.³⁰ Sometimes men owned both sleeping and working shares. William McPeake, later a mine manager,³¹ had one of each in a claim granted in June 1868, giving him two out of the five interests.³² A year later he sold a ‘sleeping third of share’ (meaning one-fifteenth of the total interests) for £2:

²⁶ H. Dunbar-Johnson, ‘Reminiscences’, *Te Aroha News*, 13 December 1910, p. 2.

²⁷ See *Evening Post*, 30 December 1909, p. 7.

²⁸ Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Register of Te Aroha Claims 1880-1885, folio 170, BBAV 11567/1a, ANZ-A; Te Aroha Warden’s Court, *Thames Advertiser*, 23 December 1880, p. 3.

²⁹ See *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*, vol. 2, pp. 907-908; *Thames Star*, 11 June 1917, p. 1.

³⁰ Coromandel Warden’s Court, Instruments 1869, 1828/40, 2052/175, AAAE 15171/1a, ANZ-A.

³¹ See *New Zealand Herald*, 1 May 1889, p. 5.

³² Thames Warden’s Court, Thames Claims Register 1868, folio 95, BAAL 14397/1a, ANZ-A.

‘James Hicks³³ accepts my title to said interest and hereby binds himself to risk any dispute that may hereafter arise about said interest’.³⁴ This was an unusually low price: for example, Keepa Te Wharau, a Ngati Rahiri rangatira,³⁵ sold half of his one sleeping share (there were five shares in all) for £40.³⁶ When Albert Moore, then a miner but later a carpenter,³⁷ bought half a sleeping share he paid £50 and the seller agreed ‘to work the said share free of all expenses’.³⁸

Along with a publican, Charles Featherstone Mitchell,³⁹ one of the earliest storekeepers at Thames,⁴⁰ having invested in that field when it started, later sought a refund of their money from the reward offered for finding it. They claimed to have ‘paid large sums for provisions, meat, timber, tools, etc’, in keeping a number of men prospecting, sinking shafts, and proving that the field was payable.⁴¹ Mitchell also sold a quarter of one share in one mine for £75, receiving £35 in cash and the rest from the first dividends, being required to work this interest ‘free of costs’ to the purchaser, clearly a sleeping partner, ‘until the receipt of the first Dividend’.⁴² In 1868, James McCrea Brigham, an accountant, office manager, and from 1872 onwards secretary of the Auckland Harbour Board,⁴³ bought two half-shares in the same mine. The first cost him £10, which was to be paid within two months, plus 10s per week for wages and for assisting to meet crushing charges.⁴⁴ Shortly afterwards, the other interest cost £28 10s, paid by £10 cash and the rest by a promissory note

³³ As there were men several with this name, his life has not been traced.

³⁴ Thames Warden’s Court, Certificates of Registration of Transfers of Shares 1869, no. 94, BACL 14424/1b; Register of Deeds 1869, folio 15, BACL 14417/4a, ANZ-A.

³⁵ See paper on his life.

³⁶ Thames Warden’s Court, Thames Claims Register 1868-1869, no. 466, BACL 14397/2a; Register of Agreements and Licenses 1868-1870, folios 105-106, BACL 14417/1a, ANZ-A.

³⁷ See *Thames Advertiser*, 30 November 1880, p. 3, 29 July 1887, p. 2.

³⁸ Thames Warden’s Court, Register of Agreements 1868, folio 299, BACL 14417/2a, ANZ-A.

³⁹ See paper on the Thames Miners’ Union.

⁴⁰ See *Ohinemuri Gazette*, 25 November 1899, p. 2.

⁴¹ *Auckland Weekly News*, 26 March 1870, p. 8.

⁴² Thames Warden’s Court, Register of Agreements 1868, folio 503, BACL 14417/2a, ANZ-A.

⁴³ See *New Zealand Herald*, 15 December 1910, p. 6.

⁴⁴ Thames Warden’s Court, Register of Deeds 1869, folio 60, BACL 14417/4a, ANZ-A.

due three months later, plus 10s weekly and half his expenses to a named working partner.⁴⁵ In the same month, Harry Roberts Burt, an interpreter and land agent,⁴⁶ sold half a share for £20 plus 15s a week, to be paid for by working this interest until the first crushing, after which 10s a week was to be provided.⁴⁷

One Thames miner, John Christie,⁴⁸ gave half of a working share along with 10s a week until payable gold was found to another miner in return for the latter working the full share.⁴⁹ Another miner, William Redshaw, who later managed a coal mine at Kamo,⁵⁰ agreed to work a share until payable gold was found in return for receiving half the share plus 15s per week. He was required to pay his half share of the costs of machinery and crushing while the man whose share he was working paid a full share of the expenses of tools and lights.⁵¹ Miner John Moore⁵² received no cash sum for half a working share, but in return for ‘faithfully working the full share for their mutual benefit’ received 12s weekly until payable gold was struck.⁵³ James Smith, another miner,⁵⁴ agreed to work a share for 10s a week until payable gold was found. He was ‘to bear equally’ in ‘any reasonable expense’, and when payable gold was struck he would receive half a working share.⁵⁵ William Tregoweth, a prominent miner and prospector,⁵⁶ signed an especially elaborate agreement. He received half of a share in a claim for working Thomas Taylor’s⁵⁷ full share for 10s a week and all working expenses until payable crushings were obtained, at which point he was to receive half a full wage, would pay half the expenses, and

⁴⁵ Thames Warden’s Court, Register of Deeds 1869, folio 74, BACL 14417/4a, ANZ-A.

⁴⁶ See *Bay of Plenty Times*, 2 April 1917, p. 2.

⁴⁷ Thames Warden’s Court, Register of Deeds 1869, folio 82, BACL 14417/4a, ANZ-A.

⁴⁸ See *Thames Star*, 17 March 1900, p. 3.

⁴⁹ Thames Warden’s Court, Register of Agreements and Licenses 1868-1870, folios 151-152, BACL 14417/1a, ANZ-A.

⁵⁰ See *Auckland Star*, 22 May 1899, p. 6.

⁵¹ Thames Warden’s Court, Register of Agreements 1868, folio 92, BACL 14417/2a, ANZ-A.

⁵² See *Auckland Weekly News*, 3 June 1893, p. 10.

⁵³ Thames Warden’s Court, Register of Deeds 1869, folios 420-421, BACL 14417/4a, ANZ-A.

⁵⁴ See *Observer*, 19 July 1929, p. 21.

⁵⁵ Thames Warden’s Court, Register of Deeds 1869, folio 279, BACL 14417/3a, ANZ-A.

⁵⁶ See *Observer*, 24 October 1908, p. 21.

⁵⁷ There were too many with this name to trace.

when the mine yielded a dividend of £50 per full share he was to pay Taylor £25.⁵⁸

A storekeeper, Thomas Wells,⁵⁹ in 1868 bought half a share in a Tararu claim for £20, paying half immediately and the other half in three months time, and agreed to pay the seller, a working partner, 15s weekly ‘in cash or goods until the dividends from the said half share will amount to two pounds sterling per week, then the payments shall be one pound sterling per week’.⁶⁰ Agreements varied considerably in their requirements. For example, a mining agent, Edward Wood,⁶¹ sold a quarter share in one Thames mine for £55 and 15s a week in wages plus up to 10s weekly in working expenses; a month later he purchased the same interest in another claim for £60, ‘free of wages but subject to the due proportion of working expenses’.⁶² Thomas Williams,⁶³ who managed the Canadian Company’s mine at Waiorongomai in 1883, paid 9s a day, the normal rate of wages, for another miner to work his share in another mine.⁶⁴

Some miners made private arrangements to provide funds for prospecting. For instance, William Francis (‘Daldy’) McWilliams⁶⁵ recalled that in the 1870s the working capital for a Karangahake mine was provided by two of his party who ‘tackled any job they could get’ whilst the other two ‘fossicked in the ranges’.⁶⁶ David McLean Wallace, a pioneer blacksmith at Waiorongomai,⁶⁷ arranged for a mate to prospect there for ‘half wages and the two to share any claim’ found.⁶⁸ In 1886, a policeman-turned-miner, Nicholas Cleary,⁶⁹ made a verbal agreement with a publican, James

⁵⁸ Thames Warden’s Court, Register of Deeds 1869, folio 237, BACL 14417/3a, ANZ-A.

⁵⁹ See *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*, vol. 2, pp. 767-768; *Waikato Argus*, 28 April 1910, p. 2.

⁶⁰ Thames Warden’s Court, Register of Agreements 1868, folio 362, BACL 14417/2a, ANZ-A.

⁶¹ See *Auckland Weekly News*, 14 September 1905, p. 22.

⁶² Thames Warden’s Court, Register of Deeds 1869, folios 255, 325, BACL 14417/3a, ANZ-A.

⁶³ Too many with this name to trace.

⁶⁴ *Te Aroha News*, 6 October 1883, p. 3, Magistrate’s Court, 8 December 1883, p. 2.

⁶⁵ See *Waihi Daily Telegraph*, 20 January 1931, p. 2; *Observer*, 22 January 1931, p. 8.

⁶⁶ *Te Aroha and the Fortunate Valley: Pioneering in the Thames Valley 1867-1930*, ed. F.W. Wild (Te Aroha, 1930), p. 315.

⁶⁷ See paper on his life.

⁶⁸ *Te Aroha News*, 19 October 1927, Supplement, p. 1.

⁶⁹ See *Te Aroha News*, 16 April 1890, p. 3.

Warren,⁷⁰ whom he owed 25s for board and lodging. Cleary had marked off a claim at Waiorongomai, and ‘in consideration of a half share in the claim, Warren agreed to cry quits, and also to allow me 25s per week towards the cost of working the claim’.⁷¹ Two years later, John O’Brien, a miner and contractor,⁷² arranged with the owners of the Mt Morgan at Te Aroha to receive half the interest ‘to thoroughly prospect the claim at his own expense’.⁷³

On all goldfields, it was common for storekeepers and publicans to provide prospectors and miners with provisions. In the Te Aroha rush, Waikato shopkeepers paid and provisioned prospectors to get a foothold in the field.⁷⁴ David Snodgrass, a baker,⁷⁵ in 1868 bought half of a share (one-tenth of the total interests) not for cash but for supplying provisions for two miners. Each week they were to receive ‘One pound of Coffee (14) loaves of Bread four pounds of sugar seven pounds of meat two pounds of Butter and two of Candles. This supply to continue for the space of Two months’.⁷⁶ When at Waitekauri in the 1870s, Snodgrass gave food to prospectors unable to pay for it.⁷⁷ He supplied bread for one mining party, receiving, it was implied in a court case, an interest in their claim as payment, but then ‘refused to pay his calls’.⁷⁸ John Phillips junior, a storekeeper at Paeroa and, later, Waihi and other mining settlements,⁷⁹ was praised in 1892: ‘a straighter man or a better friend to prospectors never lived’.⁸⁰ When Phillips set up in business in Auckland, the Paeroa newspaper stated that his ‘generous support to prospectors, many of whom he kept going for years,

⁷⁰ See *Te Aroha News*, 11 September 1886, p. 3.

⁷¹ Magistrate’s Court, *Te Aroha News*, 26 November 1887, p. 3.

⁷² See ‘Waiorongomai Correspondent’, *Waikato Times*, 7 June 1888, p. 2; *Observer*, 20 May 1905, p. 17.

⁷³ *Waikato Times*, 24 November 1888, p. 2.

⁷⁴ *Te Aroha Miner and Thames Valley Agriculturalist*, 30 November 1880, reprinted in *Shop in Te Aroha: Carnival Week October 17 to 24, 1927: Souvenir programme of events and competitions* (Te Aroha, 1927), p. 79.

⁷⁵ See *Auckland Weekly News*, 27 April 1895, p. 20.

⁷⁶ Thames Warden’s Court, Register of Agreements 1868, folio 137, BACL 14417/2a, ANZ-A.

⁷⁷ *Thames Advertiser*, 22 August 1876, p. 3.

⁷⁸ Magistrate’s Court, *Thames Advertiser*, 29 June 1878, p. 3.

⁷⁹ See *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*, vol. 2, p. 853; *Ohinemuri Gazette*, 29 July 1903, p. 2.

⁸⁰ Letter from ‘W.X. Wisehead’, *Ohinemuri Gazette*, 29 October 1892, p. 3.

to tributors and small mine owners, in the old days' had 'materially contributed to the success of the Ohinemuri goldfield'.⁸¹ One tributer at Waitekauri received goods from his store for nearly three years.⁸² When this tributer went bankrupt, he told the court that it was 'a custom for storekeepers to back men up with goods while tributing'.⁸³ When James William Shaw,⁸⁴ the proprietor of the Commercial Hotel in Paeroa, left there in 1901, at his farewell he was praised for having 'assisted many a prospector with money and often board and lodgings'.⁸⁵ Robert Turbitt Douglas, a Thames baker and storekeeper,⁸⁶ in 1882 provided bread to a member of a tribute party, in return receiving half of one share. He attended several meetings 'to watch his interest', receiving part of a dividend from this miner as part-payment of his bread bill, thereby being regarded as his 'dividing mate' and therefore liable to pay his share of the party's debts.⁸⁷ In the same year, John Watson Walker, a prominent miner,⁸⁸ was assured that, if he withdrew his objection to the lease applied for by Joseph Newman, a leading sharebroker and investor,⁸⁹ for a Waiorongomai claim, Newman would pay 'for the lease and work to be paid for by him till a company is formed then Shares to be sold to pay all preliminary expenses – then one third of remainder to go to Mr Newman and two thirds to yourself'.⁹⁰

Whereas Dunbar Johnson had been concerned at the 'incubus' of the sleeping partners for the working partners, one of the problems the former experienced was that working partners sometimes did little work, at their expense. This was implied in an agreement made in 1868 by John Gibbons,

⁸¹ *Ohinemuri Gazette*, 29 July 1903, p. 2.

⁸² District Court, *Thames Advertiser*, 8 September 1886, p. 3.

⁸³ Thames District Court, Bankruptcy Cases 1885-1887, hearing of 7 September 1886, BACL 14415/1a, ANZ-A.

⁸⁴ See *Ohinemuri Gazette*, 9 June 1897, p. 2, 26 August 1921, p. 3.

⁸⁵ *Ohinemuri Gazette*, 11 November 1901, p. 2.

⁸⁶ See *Thames Advertiser*, 28 June 1879, p. 3, 3 November 1887, p. 2, 21 June 1890, p. 2; *Observer*, 17 June 1905, p. 9.

⁸⁷ Magistrate's Court, *Thames Advertiser*, 22 July 1882, p. 3.

⁸⁸ See paper on his life.

⁸⁹ See *Auckland Weekly News*, 31 July 1869, p. 3, 17 February 1872, p. 10, 14 December 1872, p. 10; *New Zealand Herald*, 5 January 1892, p. 5.

⁹⁰ J.M. Rowe to J.W. Walker, 7 June 1882, Te Aroha Warden's Court, Plaints 1882, BBAV 11572/1a, ANZ-A.

then a battery owner but usually a timber merchant.⁹¹ He bought a tenth of the interests in a mine for £35, £10 being paid immediately and the remainder in three monthly instalments; in return, the vendor was to work his interest for £1 per week 'in an honest and faithful manner and free of further working expenses to John Gibbons'.⁹² In 1886, John Phillips explained how he had assisted Isaac Phillip Leah, a future mine manager,⁹³ who had filed for bankruptcy. Phillips was owed £70 by this miner, as he explained:

His firm had been maintaining the debtor for nearly three years while he was tributing at Waitekauri. Latterly Leah went to work for wages, the understanding being that a portion of his wages would be devoted towards payment of the goods so supplied. As soon, however, as the debtor received his wages he left for the Thames without paying witness anything as promised.⁹⁴

Another instance of miners not working as required was revealed in the following year, when the five owners of a Waiomu claim were charged with not working it properly. Thomas Veale, then a grocer, baker, and storekeeper at Thames,⁹⁵ informed the warden that he was the agent of John Buchanan, an Auckland merchant who later became a farmer near Paeroa.⁹⁶ Veale paid the wages of two miners who worked the interests of Buchanan and another Auckland shareholder. Under cross-examination, he revealed that he did not closely supervise the miners. 'I knew they were doing proper work in the mine. I never asked the men where they were working. I asked them how the mine was looking'.⁹⁷ Buchanan stated that he held 3 1/2 shares for himself and others, and intended registering a company.

⁹¹ See *Thames Star*, 29 January 1900, p. 3; *Observer*, 13 December 1902, p. 4.

⁹² Thames Warden's Court, Register of Agreements 1868, folios 274-275, BACL 14417/2a, ANZ-A.

⁹³ See Magistrate's Court, *Thames Advertiser*, 22 January 1897, p. 1.

⁹⁴ District Court, *Thames Advertiser*, 8 September 1886, p. 3.

⁹⁵ See *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*, vol. 6, pp. 122, 124; *Te Aroha News*, 16 September 1931, p. 5.

⁹⁶ See *Auckland Weekly News*, 19 January 1889, p. 30, 6 August 1892, p. 36.

⁹⁷ Warden's Court, *Thames Advertiser*, 13 May 1887, p. 3.

The shares were represented by wages men. I do not traffic in shares. I left instructions to Mr Veale about five weeks ago to keep the claim manned, see that he got good men, to pay the wages, and to let me know how the mine was getting on. I knew that Mr Black⁹⁸ was put on to represent one of the shares, and to look after our interests. The first time I knew of any dispute was from a paragraph in the *Star*. I believe that proper work was being done. I got no notice from anybody as to what was being done on the claim.

After hearing of problems, he consulted with a Thames owner about forming a company so that ‘the claim would be better managed, so that no one individual could be served for any debts on the claim’. The owners did not trust the mine manager. Black ‘did not ever write to me; never gave me a report. All the affairs of the Auckland shareholders were left in the hands of Mr Veale’. A meeting of Thames shareholders informed the two Auckland ones ‘that their representatives ... refused to work, or at least to work to any advantage’, which was ‘simply ruinous to all concerned, and a positive waste of money’. Buchanan agreed that the money was ‘being fooled away’. The warden agreed that the men were not working properly, commenting that it was ‘foolish to appoint, as an agent, a man like Mr Veale, who was entirely ignorant of mining’.⁹⁹

Clearly sleeping partners who lived outside the district found it hard to supervise their mines. Thomas George Marlow, a commercial traveller,¹⁰⁰ held one-seventh of the interests in the *Success*, at Waiorongomai. When sued in April 1888 for its forfeiture for non-working, he explained that, being based in Auckland but ‘greatly absent’ from there, he ‘empowered’ an agent to act on his behalf. ‘I visited the ground twice since the beginning of the year’, and saw a local businessman who told him that ‘he had done what was necessary’ about manning the ground. When he saw another Te Aroha businessman in Thames he ‘asked him to enquire if the claim was protected’, and was told it was.¹⁰¹ The owners were fined in lieu of forfeiture because ‘no willful and continuous neglect to work their mine had been proved’.¹⁰²

⁹⁸ Not identified.

⁹⁹ Warden’s Court, *Thames Advertiser*, 14 May 1887, p. 2.

¹⁰⁰ See *Auckland Weekly News*, 17 January 1891, p. 15.

¹⁰¹ Warden’s Court, *Te Aroha News*, 25 April 1888, p. 2.

¹⁰² Warden’s Court, *Te Aroha News*, 28 April 1888, p. 2.

Sleeping partners were required to have their share worked, or 'represented' in the parlance of the day, and were sued if they did not pay for a miner to work it. For example, in January 1881 Matenga Morewa,¹⁰³ a partner in a Tui claim, successfully sued a Pakeha sleeping partner who did not work his share and had it allotted to him.¹⁰⁴ Edward Wood was successfully sued for the amount owing to a miner who worked his interest.¹⁰⁵ Michael Corcoran, a publican,¹⁰⁶ denied employing two miners in another Coromandel claim, and 'also his liability as a shareholder'. Evidence from the legal manager 'clearly proved his liability, and judgment was given for the amount claimed with costs'.¹⁰⁷ In 1881, judgement was given against Audus Raynes, another publican,¹⁰⁸ 'as a shareholder in the All Nations claim' at Te Aroha 'for work done. It appears from the plaintiff's statement that he chose Raynes as a good mark [someone who paid his employees 'regularly and in full']¹⁰⁹ (poor Raynes)'.¹¹⁰

When James Alexander Pond, by profession an analyst,¹¹¹ 'represented' another's share for two days, it was alleged that Pond had not done any work, but he responded that he had helped to construct a hut, for which he expected to be paid.¹¹² Charles Curtis, possibly the same man as the prominent Thames publican Charles Walter Curtis,¹¹³ in late 1870 spent a few weeks at Coromandel prospecting with James Eccleson, who

¹⁰³ See Te Aroha Warden's Court, Miner's Right no. 476, issued 25 November 1880, Miners' Rights Butt Book 1880, BBAV 11533/1c; Register of Te Aroha Claims 1880-1888, folio 205, BBAV 11567/1a; Notices of Marking Out Claims 1881, May-July 1881, no. 226, BBAV 11557/1b, ANZ-A; *Thames Advertiser*, 29 November 1880, p. 3; *New Zealand Gazette*, 24 February 1881, p. 258.

¹⁰⁴ Te Aroha Warden's Court, *Thames Star*, 27 January 1881, p. 2.

¹⁰⁵ Thames Warden's Court, Minute Book of Resident Magistrate's Court, Coromandel, 1870-1874, hearing of 7 July 1871, BACL 14442/2a, ANZ-A.

¹⁰⁶ See *Observer*, 30 August 1902, p. 4.

¹⁰⁷ Coromandel Magistrate's Court, *Auckland Weekly News*, 4 September 1886, p. 14.

¹⁰⁸ See *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*, vol. 6, pp. 101-102.

¹⁰⁹ Eric Partridge, *A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English*, 8 ed., ed. Paul Beale (London, 1984), p. 722.

¹¹⁰ *Thames Advertiser*, 2 June 1881, p. 3.

¹¹¹ See paper on his life.

¹¹² Thames Warden's Court, Warden's Notebook March-June 1869, hearing of 24 June 1869, BACL 14457/1b, ANZ-A.

¹¹³ See *Thames Advertiser*, 31 October 1870, p. 2, Police Court, 20 June 1877, p. 3.

mined in that district for many years,¹¹⁴ and William Yelland, a publican who invested in mining before becoming a farmer.¹¹⁵ In December, the warden recorded Curtis' evidence against Eccleson:

Yelland went into a claim himself – Eccleson got discharged I kept on working – I agreed to let him go prospecting and I was to have had a share, I paying him. W. Yelland and others marked off a claim underneath Poverty in which Y was working – he sends for me – and told me I could have a quarter share by paying 1/4 wages – I agreed to this I paid him 2 weeks wages of 1/4 £1 – I paid him again and paid him a further 10/- [10s]. I saw him the next week and he said he was going to throw his interest up I said I better do the same – I went up with Defendant – and he showed me another piece he had pegged off and said you can have another 1/4 here instead of the other and I said I would take it – He took the share up he had the ground pegged off two or three days before then.

Despite then claiming it was no good, Eccleston worked 'the new piece', prompting Curtis to appeal to the warden.

I paid him in all £2 I was to have a share in whatever he found – the first £1 was to pay for his Miner's Right.... He worked the fortnight I was in the Sunnyside [claim] – My agreement was only for a quarter – Our mateship was chucked up on ground.... When I made the new agreement I was to meet him on the beach – He avoided me for a fortnight.

After conflicting evidence over whether Curtis held an interest in the new ground, he was non-suited.¹¹⁶ William Dodd, a miner and labourer,¹¹⁷ was more successful when he sued Donald Norman Watson, a brewer,¹¹⁸ in 1875. Watson was one of the four owners in a Karangahake claim, but

¹¹⁴ *Auckland Star*, 1 June 1887, p. 5, 4 May 1896, p. 3, 21 May 1896, p. 2.

¹¹⁵ Advertisements, *New Zealand Herald*, 29 March 1870, p. 2, 26 October 1871, p. 1, 18 August 1873, p. 1; advertisements, *Press*, 30 April 1880, p. 4, 7 March 1890, p. 8.

¹¹⁶ Thames Warden's Court, Warden's Notebook, Coromandel, 1870-1880, hearing on 13 December 1870, pp. 80-86, BACL 14440/1b, ANZ-A.

¹¹⁷ See *Thames Advertiser*, 12 February 1876, p. 3, 23 September 1876, p. 3, 23 December 1880, p. 3, 26 September 1885, p. 3; Magistrate's Court, *Te Aroha News*, 18 May 1889, p. 2.

¹¹⁸ See *Auckland Weekly News*, 26 December 1901, p. 22.

forfeited his share after six weeks for not working it.¹¹⁹ Dodd stated that he had been employed to work a half share on Watson's behalf, but was soon 'knocked off'. As Watson 'never gave me transfer for the half share', he sued for the whole share, successfully.¹²⁰ Ten years later, Dodd was involved in a dispute over control of another Karangahake claim in which he had 'failed to represent his interest'.¹²¹

In December 1880, Robert Crompton, a miner,¹²² sued William Henry Pearce, a Hamilton publican,¹²³ who had employed him to work his share in a Te Aroha claim. Crompton 'deposed that he was engaged by the defendant in [George] O'Halloran's hotel, to represent his share in the Morning Star claim, at 10s per day. The job was to last as long as the claim was worked by shareholders'. He had worked from 25 November to 13 December, when William Wood, manager of the claim,¹²⁴ acting as Pearce's agent, 'told him to leave'. Wood 'offered him 8s a day, which he refused to take, as defendant had agreed to give him 10s'. Under cross-examination, he stated that he 'did not know how many hours a day he worked. He worked the same as the other men. He did a day's work. He would swear that on an average he worked four hours a day'. Crompton also claimed that shifts were 'usually four hours', eight hours being 'considered more than a day's work at Te Aroha'. Wood deposed that he had received a message from Pearce to reduce his wages, adding that 'four hours was not a day's work on a gold field'. After the first four days, Crompton worked only four hours a day: offered 'a fortnight's wages at 8s a day', he 'refused to take the money', and was dismissed.¹²⁵ The amount claimed was £7 10s; the warden awarded £6 10s.¹²⁶

Sleeping partners were sometimes sued for failure to fulfil their part of the bargain by not providing the agreed finance. For example, in 1895

¹¹⁹ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Register of Ohinemuri Claims 1875, folio 29, BBAV 11568/1a, ANZ-A.

¹²⁰ Ohinemuri Warden's Court, *Thames Advertiser*, 22 April 1875, p. 3, 24 April 1875, p. 3.

¹²¹ Warden's Court, *Thames Advertiser*, 21 September 1885, p. 3.

¹²² His life has not been traced.

¹²³ See *New Zealand Herald*, 6 January 1902, p. 5; *Observer*, 11 January 1902, p. 4.

¹²⁴ See *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*, vol. 2, p. 892.

¹²⁵ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 23 December 1880, p. 3.

¹²⁶ Te Aroha Warden's Court, *Plaint Book 1880-1898*, 11/1880, BBAV 11547/1a, ANZ-A.

Henry William Baskiville, who had been a butcher at Waiorongomai,¹²⁷ was a publican at Kohukohu, on the Hokianga harbour. Having been a partner in the Loyalty until late April 1894, holding one and a half of the ten shares, in January 1895 he was sued by the other owners for not paying £10 6s 1d, his share of the wages bill.¹²⁸

DUMMIES

Some shareholders in claims did not register their interests in their own names, but used dummies, for a variety of reasons. When Thomas Frederick Fenton, a Waiorongomai miner,¹²⁹ was sued for not working his interest, he responded that he was not liable because he had sold it and that the other shares in his name were 'only held ... for other people'. The magistrate disagreed, and required him to pay.¹³⁰ Gerald Richard Disney O'Halloran,¹³¹ was a warden's clerk at the opening of Ohinemuri in 1875. As he told an enquiry into the illegal issuing of miners' rights, it was 'very unusual for persons to hold two shares in a claim'. He held one in his own name and one, very thinly disguised, as 'Richard Disney', and four others took out shares for him but in their names.¹³² As a miner commented, there was 'no law to force a man to hold shares in his own name; if there was such, officials in this and other goldfields would not make much money out of mining',¹³³

Like some land speculators, O'Halloran sometimes preferred to have his interest held in trust for him by another person.¹³⁴ Miners and investors in gold or land sometimes used pseudonyms. When a mining inspector was

¹²⁷ See *Thames Advertiser*, 19 April 1882, p. 3, 6 September 1887, p. 2; *Waikato Times*, 14 April 1894, p. 8.

¹²⁸ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Plaints 1895, 1/1895, BBAV 11572/2a, ANZ-A.

¹²⁹ See chapter on the Eureka mine.

¹³⁰ Magistrate's Court, *Te Aroha News*, 22 March 1884, p. 7.

¹³¹ See *AJHR*, 1875, I-1, pp. Iii, 24, 33, 34, 36, 37; I-3, pp. 1, 2, 5, 7, 8, 34-38; Stone, *Dilworth*, pp. 151, 198-199, 214-215, 226.

¹³² 'Ohinemuri Miners' Rights Inquiries Committee', *AJHR*, 1875, I-3, pp. 2, 15, 16, 34-38; *New Zealand Times*, n.d., cited in *Thames Advertiser*, 22 October 1875, p. 3.

¹³³ Letter from 'Miner', *Thames Star*, 15 December 1886, p. 2.

¹³⁴ For example, Jackson and Russell to T.L. Murray, 3 October 1885, Jackson and Russell Letterbook no. 30, p. 826, MS 360, Library of the Auckland Institute and War Memorial Library.

asked, in 1877, whether Thames miners considered it wrong to ‘dummy’ shares, his reply ‘I believe not, your Honor’ provoked laughter in court.¹³⁵ James Henry Fleming, involved with Henry Hopper Adams¹³⁶ at Waiorongomai in the 1890s,¹³⁷ in the early 1930s was the owner of five claims at Tararu. As he had ‘no means whatever’, the ‘general impression locally’ was that he was shepherding them for one of Adams’ sons for speculative purposes.¹³⁸ Questioned by the warden, Fleming admitted not being the owner but the trustee for ‘certain persons.... He was not in a position to say if the Adams’ family had anything to do with the ground at present’.¹³⁹ The most unsubtle indication of using a dummy was at Coromandel in 1868, when the fourth name on the certificate of registration of the Ricker Ridge was ‘Dummy Native’.¹⁴⁰

When Auckland ‘land sharks’ speculated in land at Patetere, in south Waikato, dummies were used to impress British investors with an apparently large public interest in it. Six of the vendors applied for 8,000 shares in the name of 13 prominent Auckland businessmen, who were rewarded for the use of their names by receiving any profits for the shares they held in trust and were indemnified against losses.¹⁴¹ On a smaller scale, it was quite common for people to use their children as dummies. For instance, a storekeeper at Te Aroha, Robert Harris,¹⁴² was also secretary of the Te Aroha Public Hall and Reading Room Company. By 1893 most shares were held by himself, his wife, and his children, all minors.¹⁴³ He also held several residence sites, for the benefit of his children when they came of age, he claimed. When his ownership of one section was contested, Harris stated that, ‘As they had a family, he thought it only right that they should make provision for them’. The magistrate noted that children aged

¹³⁵ Supreme Court, *New Zealand Herald*, 4 October 1877, p. 3.

¹³⁶ See paper on his life.

¹³⁷ See paper on the New Zealand Exploration Company.

¹³⁸ J.F. Downey to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 29 December 1931, 20 January 1932, Mines Department, MD 1, 10/7/42, Part 2, ANZ-W.

¹³⁹ *Thames Star*, 4 February 1932, press cutting in Mines Department, MD 1, 10/7/42, Part 2, ANZ-W.

¹⁴⁰ Coromandel Warden’s Court, Instruments 1868, 1329/1868, AAAE 15171/1a, ANZ-A.

¹⁴¹ Stone, *Dilworth*, p. 201.

¹⁴² See *Te Aroha News*, 7 February 1885, p. 2, 15 March 1887, p. 3, 19 November 1887, p. 2, 10 March 1888, p. 2, 7 April 1888 p. 2, 11 June 1888, p. 2, 5 February 1890, p. 2.

¹⁴³ Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 41 no. 259, ANZ-A.

over 14 and holding a miner's right could hold a section, but forfeited this one, being against 'allowing a husband to hold one site while the wife held another, unless they were each prepared to reside on their own sections'. In response to accusations of speculating, Harris claimed that there were 125 other sections like his at Te Aroha.¹⁴⁴ Miners also used the names of wives and children to acquire more interests in claims. For instance, Thomas Snodgrass,¹⁴⁵ who acquired interests in two properties during the Te Aroha rush,¹⁴⁶ when aged 12 was listed as an owner of two Thames claims (along with his father in one of these).¹⁴⁷

SALTING

To be accused of salting was to lose one's reputation. Edward Kersey Cooper, involved with Waiorongomai mining in the 1880s,¹⁴⁸ in 1887 published the following advertisement:

£5 Reward

Whereas rumour says that some person or persons have accused me of salting, or instructing to be salted, or causing to be salted a prospect taken from the Winner Licensed Holding at Waihi, I will give the above reward to any one who will give such evidence as will lead to the conviction of the lying scoundrel or scoundrels.¹⁴⁹

To charge someone with salting was to lay oneself open to a charge of libel, and although no formal charges have been traced, there was much rumour and gossip. 'An Old Hand' informed the *Waihi Miner* in 1897 of how Thomas Russell,¹⁵⁰ a leading mining investor, 'was once had'. Hugh Robert

¹⁴⁴ Magistrate's Court, *Te Aroha News*, 8 February 1900, p. 2.

¹⁴⁵ See *Thames Advertiser*, 28 February 1883, p. 2, 24 September 1885, p. 2, 8 April 1887, p. 2; *Ohinemuri Gazette*, 8 December 1905, p. 2.

¹⁴⁶ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Register of Te Aroha Claims 1880-1888, folio 192, BBAV 11567/1a, ANZ-A; *New Zealand Gazette*, 20 January 1881, p. 110.

¹⁴⁷ Thames Warden's Court, Claims Register 1869, nos. 1570, 1689, BBAV 11439/4a, ANZ-A; Birth Certificate of Thomas Snodgrass, 22 August 1857, 1857/3343, BDM.

¹⁴⁸ See paper on his life.

¹⁴⁹ Advertisement, *Hauraki Tribune*, 23 September 1887, p. 2.

¹⁵⁰ For contrasting views, see *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*, vol. 2, p. 104; R.C.J. Stone, 'Thomas Russell', *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography: vol. 1: 1769-1869* (Wellington, 1990), pp. 377-379.

Jones, popularly known as ‘Manukau’ from his involvement with that early and very successful Thames mine,¹⁵¹ put a crushing from his Golden Hill mine through a battery, obtained a return of three and a half ounces to the ton, and promptly sold the claim to Russell for £1,500. The next crushing produced the same number of pennyweights, whereupon the battery manager admitted to Russell that the first crushing had been salted. ‘As “Manukau” had done his work most inartistically, the battery manager could not fail to smell a rat. Plates clean for an hour, then piling up the amalgam’. The manager said he saw the salting, but knew he would be sued for libel if he said it happened and then couldn’t prove it.¹⁵² Hiding the truth, for whatever reason, occurred on other occasions: for instance, in 1895 the *Observer* reported that ‘an atrocious mining swindle was laid bare this week. Nothing will be said about the matter, “by arrangement”’.¹⁵³ And ‘Obadiah’ recounted a tale of early Thames:

A reef composed of gold bearing rubbly quartz was constructed specially for the benefit of a mining expert. This gentleman was one of the green order of beings who are generally sent out by mining speculators to report on prospecting. He swallowed the bait, recommended his principals to purchase the “show” and the only gold ever taken out was contained in the two cartloads of ore placed there artificially by the vendors in the first instance.¹⁵⁴

In the 1930s, there were several examples at Waiorongomai of exaggerating assay values.¹⁵⁵ Sometimes exaggerations may have been incompetence rather than fraud, as for instance when, during the Te Aroha rush, some reports of finds were false, such as claiming to have found a seam of gold two and a half inches thick.¹⁵⁶ John McCombie noted that some miners could not tell gold from iron pyrites, but also recalled deliberate frauds. He knew of a man with gold dust in his tobacco dropping

¹⁵¹ See *Thames Advertiser*, 15 October 1870, p. 3, 28 December 1874, p. 3, 15 February 1876, p. 3; ‘Te Aroha Arrows’, *Observer*, 19 February 1881, p. 236; *New Zealand Herald*, 26 August 1922, Supplement, p. 1.

¹⁵² *Waihi Miner*, n.d., cited in *Observer*, 27 February 1897, p. 18.

¹⁵³ *Observer*, 1 June 1895, p. 3.

¹⁵⁴ ‘Obadiah’, ‘Shares and Mining’, *Observer*, 14 November 1903, p. 20.

¹⁵⁵ See papers on company formation in the Te Aroha district in the 1930s and on Malcolm Hardy.

¹⁵⁶ *Waikato Times*, 30 November 1880, p. 2.

the ash and gold dust into the dish as he was panning samples.¹⁵⁷ ‘One of the men who took a minor part in working the “oracle” ’ [succeeding through cunning]¹⁵⁸ told him of prospectors salting an expert’s samples while he was playing cards. The prospectors considered the mine to be worthless, yet when an adit was driven good gold was struck.¹⁵⁹ On the West Coast, a similar story was told of a salted shaft which, when sunk ‘a few feet deeper’ by its new owners, ‘actually struck a payable reef’.¹⁶⁰

Mark Twain would not have been surprised, for he had his own stories about selective sampling and misleading assays:

The sagacious reader will know now, without being told, that the speculative miner, in getting a “fire-assay” made of a piece of rock from his mine (to help him sell the same), was not in the habit of picking out the least valuable fragment of rock on his dump-pile, but quite the contrary. I have seen men hunt over a pile of nearly worthless quartz for an hour, and at last find a little piece as large as a filbert [hazel nut],¹⁶¹ which was rich in gold and silver – and this was reserved for a fire-assay! Of course the fire-assay would demonstrate that a ton of such rock would yield hundreds of dollars – and on such assays many an utterly worthless mine was sold.

Assaying was a good business, and so some men engaged in it, occasionally, who were not strictly scientific and capable. One assayer got such rich results out of all specimens brought to him that in time he acquired almost a monopoly of the business. But like all men who achieve success, he became an object of envy and suspicion. The other assayers entered into a conspiracy against him, and let some prominent citizens into the secret in order to show that they meant fairly. Then they broke a little fragment off a carpenter’s grindstone and got a stranger to take it to the popular scientist and get it assayed. In the course of an hour the result came – whereby it appeared that a ton of that rock would yield \$1,284.40 in silver and \$366.36 in gold!

Due publication of the whole matter was made in the paper, and the popular assayer left town “between two days.”¹⁶²

¹⁵⁷ John McCombie, ‘Gold Mining Swindles’, *Observer*, 29 April 1922, p. 16.

¹⁵⁸ Jonathon Green, *The Cassell Dictionary of Slang* (London, 1998), p. 1297.

¹⁵⁹ John McCombie, ‘The Prospectors’ Swindle’, *Observer*, 1 July 1922, p. 13.

¹⁶⁰ Metcalfe, p. 9.

¹⁶¹ Green, p. 414.

¹⁶² Twain, pp. 236-237.

Dubious assaying was only one way of booming a mine. For instance, Henry Endres,¹⁶³ a publican who participated in the Te Aroha rush,¹⁶⁴ in 1882 was a sleeping partner in an Otonui claim. The man working his interest became a shareholder: 'The amount was £10, to be worked-out, but £15 was inserted in the agreement, so that people might think the shares were of more value'.¹⁶⁵

PROSPECTING ASSOCIATIONS

Prospecting associations, using the capital of subscribers who had the same role as the earlier sleeping partners, a term no longer used, were commonly formed when goldfields slumped. For instance, an Aroha Prospecting Association formed in late 1884 was to have from 40 to 50 members, each subscribing £1 as their initial payment and 5s each week to pay the wages and expenses of four or five experienced prospectors. Although not explicitly stated that subscribers would be given shares in any discoveries, this was implied.¹⁶⁶ In 1885, the *Te Aroha News* regretted that the 'craze for companies with thousands of shares' had in recent times replaced 'the old disposition to invest small sums in supporting prospecting parties':

The greater portion of the now valuable reefs of Victoria were developed by means of the good old system under which practical miners, while prospecting, were well satisfied to work for half wages. A small company of twelve shareholders would be formed, ten of whom would contribute 5s or 6s each, to be paid as wages to the remaining two who would work.

It believed that a few such companies would enable the testing of the 'hundreds' of 'likely spots'. Local shareholders would supervise the work and

¹⁶³ See *Thames Advertiser*, 16 September 1874, p. 3, 24 January 1876, p. 2; *Thames Star*, 27 February 1880, p. 2, 3 July 1880, p. 2, 7 August 1889, p. 2.

¹⁶⁴ *Auckland Provincial Government Gazette*, 5 September 1876, p. 349; Te Aroha Warden's Court, Miner's Right no. 344, issued 24 November 1880, Miners' Rights Butt Book 1880, BBAV 11533/1a; Register of Te Aroha Claims 1880-1888, folio 202, BBAV 11568/1a, ANZ-A; *Thames Star*, 27 February 1880, p. 2.

¹⁶⁵ Magistrate's Court, *Thames Star*, 8 December 1882, p. 2.

¹⁶⁶ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 29 November 1884, p. 2.

keep expenses 'down as far as possible'. In this way 'comparatively small sums might be productive of very important results'.¹⁶⁷

MINERS WORKING ALONE: DAVID PIERCE HUGHES

David Pierce Hughes, a miner who lived at Quartzville,¹⁶⁸ in November 1886 became the sole owner of the Arvonja claim, of two men's ground.¹⁶⁹ As was normal, he had a partner to assist in working it.¹⁷⁰ Seven months later, he applied for protection, 'ground being dangerous', and three months was granted on the recommendation of the mining inspector; it 'had been very well worked'.¹⁷¹ Another three months' protection was granted in April 1888, this time the reasons being 'want of Capital and with intention to amalgamate with adjoining claim'.¹⁷² This amalgamation did not take place, and in February 1889 another three months' protection was sought. The warden was informed that they had done '30ft driving over 30ft stoping and worked out part of Block and Whare burnt down and no capital'. Once again protection was granted,¹⁷³ but in September the claim was abandoned.¹⁷⁴

MINERS WORKING ALONE: RICHARD BURKE

¹⁶⁷ Editorial, *Te Aroha News*, 29 August 1885, p. 2.

¹⁶⁸ Te Aroha Warden's Court, *Plaint Book 1880-1898*, 26/1890, BBAV 11547/1a, ANZ-A.

¹⁶⁹ Te Aroha Warden's Court, *Register of Te Aroha Claims 1880-1888*, folio 145, BBAV 11567/1a, ANZ-A.

¹⁷⁰ D.P. Hughes to Warden, 9 February 1887, Te Aroha Warden's Court, *Mining Applications 1887*, BBAV 11290/11a, ANZ-A.

¹⁷¹ Te Aroha Warden's Court, *Hearings 1883-1900*, 31/1887, BBAV 11505/1a; D.P. Hughes to Warden, 6 April 1888, *Mining Applications 1888*, BBAV 11289/12a, ANZ-A; *Te Aroha News*, 23 July 1887, p. 3.

¹⁷² Te Aroha Warden's Court, *Register of Te Aroha Claims 1880-1888*, folio 145, BBAV 11567/1a; D.P. Hughes to Warden, 6 April 1888, *Mining Applications 1888*, BBAV 11289/12a, ANZ-A.

¹⁷³ D.P. Hughes to Warden, 11 February 1889, Te Aroha Warden's Court, *Mining Applications 1889*, BBAV 11289/12a, ANZ-A.

¹⁷⁴ Te Aroha Warden's Court, *Register of Te Aroha Claims 1880-1888*, folio 145, BBAV 11567/1a, ANZ-A.

Richard Burke was another Waiorongomai miner who sometimes worked with others¹⁷⁵ but normally mined alone in his Welcome claim. In 1884 when he first acquired a tribute in a claim with this name adjacent to the Werahiko mine, he was referred to as ‘an old and experienced miner’ who would give the ground ‘a thorough trial’.¹⁷⁶ An unknown number working in this tribute ‘erected a small sluicing-box close to the County tramway, all home manufacture’.¹⁷⁷ In November 1885, he was the sole, and therefore successful, applicant for the forfeited Vermont. ‘From the very good crushings obtained by the old company, this piece of ground should prove highly remunerative if properly worked’,¹⁷⁸ but Burke failed to find any good ore. In December 1886, he became sole owner of another claim he called the Welcome, part of the old Inverness ground.¹⁷⁹ Three months later, he obtained four months’ protection, and four months after this expired more protection was granted.¹⁸⁰ During the first period of protection, he sent two samples of not very valuable ore to the Thames School of Mines for testing.¹⁸¹ In 1888, he was first granted three months’ protection to work with one man, then two more periods of three months.¹⁸² In his April application, he stated that he had worked by himself for six months and had to raise more capital.¹⁸³ The following month, he sent three tons from a new reef he had begun working for treatment at Thames, which produced an encouraging three ounces to the ton.¹⁸⁴ When applying in August, he reported that he had still been working alone, and needed protection ‘for the

¹⁷⁵ For example, Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Register of Te Aroha Claims 1880-1888, folio 147, BBAV 11567/1a; Register of Licensed Holdings 1881-1887, folio 149, BBAV 11500/9a, ANZ-A.

¹⁷⁶ *Te Aroha News*, 7 June 1884, p. 2.

¹⁷⁷ *Te Aroha News*, 21 March 1885, p. 2.

¹⁷⁸ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 14 November 1885, p. 3.

¹⁷⁹ Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Register of Te Aroha Claims 1880-1888, folio 148, BBAV 11567/1a, ANZ-A.

¹⁸⁰ Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Hearings 1883-1900, 15, 47/1887, BBAV 11505/1a, ANZ-A.

¹⁸¹ Thames School of Mines, Assay Book 1886-1887 [no pagination], ‘Samples from Mr Burke, Te Aroha. Brought by Mr Bayldon 21/3/87’, School of Mines Archives, Thames.

¹⁸² Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Hearings 1883-1900, 3, 37, 81/1888, BBAV 11505/1a, ANZ-A.

¹⁸³ Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Mining Applications 1888, 27/1888, BBAV 11289/12a, ANZ-A.

¹⁸⁴ *Te Aroha News*, Piako County Council, 17 March 1888, p.2, 19 May 1888, p. 2.

purpose of going to work to raise money'.¹⁸⁵ In 1889, he was living by himself in a small whare near his claim.¹⁸⁶ The warden permitted him to work with one man for three months, and the following year he was granted protection for four months.¹⁸⁷ Burke then abandoned his ground, moving to newer mining areas at Puhipuhi and Kuaotunu, and his claim was forfeited.¹⁸⁸

By 1895, Burke had returned to Waiorongomai, working for wages in the Loyalty, adjacent to his old ground.¹⁸⁹ In April, he objected to a rival obtaining an area that included 'a small piece of the ground on which I am living 6 acres in extent'. He declared that 'the ground has been tried by me in years past and being a resident on the Hill I would like to give it a further trial'.¹⁹⁰ Succeeding in his plaint, after only six weeks' work he applied in October for permission to work a claim again called the Welcome, of ten acres,¹⁹¹ with one man (himself) for four months. Protection was needed because he was 'driving to cut reef, not sufficient Capital to employ labour'.¹⁹² Working alone, he had driven 45 feet towards the Loyalty reef. Although the country was 'solid blue rock' and 'very hard', he was reportedly making 'good progress' and 'very sanguine of success'.¹⁹³ In February 1896, he was 'working on a nice looking lead' which gave 'every promise of opening out into something good'.¹⁹⁴ Two months later, he successfully applied for four months' protection 'for want of capital',¹⁹⁵ after informing

¹⁸⁵ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1888, 81/1888, BBAV 11289/12a, ANZ-A.

¹⁸⁶ Waiorongomai Correspondent, *Te Aroha News*, 11 May 1889, p. 2.

¹⁸⁷ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Hearings 1883-1900, 2/1889; 11/1890, BBAV 11505/1a, ANZ-A.

¹⁸⁸ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Plaints Book 1880-1898, 14/1890, 10/1891, BBAV 11547/1a; Plaints 1891, 10/1891, BBAV 11572/2a; Coromandel Warden's Court, Register of Licensed Holdings 1889-1896, folio 60, ZAAN 14057/1a; Register of Applications 1893-1895, 38/1893, ZAAP 14037/7a, ANZ-A.

¹⁸⁹ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Plaints 1895, 1/1895, BBAV 11572/2a, ANZ-A.

¹⁹⁰ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1895, 2, 9/1895, BBAV 11582/4a, ANZ-A; *Auckland Weekly News*, 8 June 1895, p. 29.

¹⁹¹ Te Aroha Warden's Court, *New Zealand Herald*, 13 June 1896, p. 6.

¹⁹² Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1895, 80/1895, BBAV 11582/4a, ANZ-A.

¹⁹³ *Te Aroha News*, 16 November 1895, p. 2.

¹⁹⁴ *Auckland Weekly News*, 29 February 1896, p. 9.

¹⁹⁵ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1896, 21/1896, BBAV 11582/4a, ANZ-A.

the warden that 'he had wrought on the property for ten months, and had spent about £80'.¹⁹⁶ The following year, he sought two periods of protection of six months' each, and, after these applications were declined, was permitted to work by himself for four months.¹⁹⁷ He applied for aid for prospecting to the town board, and managed to extract £5 12s 6d from the Mines Department for prospecting from 1 March to 14 June.¹⁹⁸ Four months' protection to work by himself was granted in January 1898 and again in April 'pending facilities for crushing'.¹⁹⁹ As so often, he had been over-optimistic, abandoned the ground, and left behind unpaid rent that was deemed unrecoverable because he could not be traced.²⁰⁰

MINERS WORKING ALONE: RICHARD THOMAS JANSEN

To meet expenses, both solitary miners and small parties often relied on assistance from sleeping partners and/or the Mines Department. For instance, Richard Thomas Jansen, a contractor and miner,²⁰¹ aged either 37 or 40 in 1902, depending on whether his marriage certificate or his death certificate was accurate (his birth in New Zealand was not registered),²⁰² in November that year applied for five acres as the Success Extended Quartz Claim.²⁰³ It was quarter of a mile south east of the Hot Springs Domain

¹⁹⁶ Te Aroha Warden's Court, *New Zealand Herald*, 13 June 1896, p. 6.

¹⁹⁷ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Hearings 1883-1900, 1, 76, 123/1897, BBAV 11505/1a; Mining Applications 1898, 30/1898, BBAV 11582/4a, ANZ-A.

¹⁹⁸ Mines Department, MD 1, 97/1072, ANZ-W; Te Aroha Town Board, *Thames Advertiser*, 24 May 1897, p. 3; Te Aroha Town Board, *Auckland Weekly News*, 25 September 1897, p. 36.

¹⁹⁹ Warden's Court, *Te Aroha News*, 13 January 1898, p. 2; Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1898, 30/1898, BBAV 11582/4a, ANZ-A.

²⁰⁰ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Letterbook 1883-1900, p. 588, BBAV 11534/1a; Mining Applications 1900, 20/1900, BBAV 11389/16a; Register of Licensed Holdings and Special Claims 1887-1909, folios 5, 64, 11500/8b, ANZ-A; Piako County Council, Minutes of Meeting of 18 September 1905, Matamata-Piako District Council Archives, Te Aroha.

²⁰¹ See Piako County Council, *Waikato Argus*, 23 January 1900, p. 4; *Auckland Weekly News*, 13 April 1911, p. 26.

²⁰² Marriage Certificate of Richard Thomas Jansen, 7 April 1892, 1892/982; Death Certificate of Richard Thomas Jansen, 5 April 1911, 1911/4051, BDM.

²⁰³ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1902, 5/1902, BBAV 11582/4b, ANZ-A.

‘near the base of the hill where the first gold was discovered’ in 1880.²⁰⁴ His application was struck out in the following February because a plan had not been lodged within the required three months.²⁰⁵ Despite this, he had continued prospecting the ground, and informed the *Te Aroha News* in August 1903 that he had been ‘very successful with his trial crushing of quartz, which he forwarded to the Thames School of Mines for treatment’.²⁰⁶ In fact, although his two loads returned an ounce of retorted gold, this barely met his expenses. As railway carriage cost 4s a ton and he intended to send another trial parcel of from 20 to 30 tons,²⁰⁷ he sought the support of the local Member of Parliament, Edward George Britton Moss,²⁰⁸ who 13 years before had been a sleeping partner in a Stoney Creek claim.²⁰⁹ Moss asked the Minister of Mines to assist either by providing a grant in aid of prospecting or by allowing him free carriage. The Minister was also asked whether the School of Mines could treat ore sent by prospectors more cheaply.²¹⁰ He replied that he had been informed that Jansen was ‘expecting a gentleman to assist him in erecting a small crushing plant if after inspection he is satisfied with the appearance of the stone’. Should that not eventuate, one ton could be tested at Thames for the cost of treatment.²¹¹ An attempt early in the year to obtain help from the borough council for prospecting within its boundaries was declined because it ‘had neither authority nor funds to grant such aid’.²¹² In November, when he

²⁰⁴ James Coutts (Inspector of Mines) to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 31 August 1903, Mines Department, MD 1, 09/699, ANZ-W.

²⁰⁵ Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Mining Applications 1902, 5/1902, BBAV 11582/4b, ANZ-A.

²⁰⁶ *Te Aroha News*, 6 August 1903, p. 2.

²⁰⁷ E.G.B. Moss to Minister of Mines, 17 August 1903, Mines Department, MD 1, 09/699, ANZ-W.

²⁰⁸ See *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*, vol. 2, p. 846.

²⁰⁹ Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Hearings 1883-1900, application dated 10 October 1890, BBAV 11505/1a, ANZ-A.

²¹⁰ E.G.B. Moss to Minister of Mines, 17 August 1903, Mines Department, MD 1, 09/699, ANZ-W.

²¹¹ Minister of Mines to E.G.B. Moss, 7 September 1903, Mines Department, MD 1, 09/699, ANZ-W.

²¹² Te Aroha Borough Council, Minutes of Meetings of 15 April 1903, 20 May 1903, Minutes of Meetings 1898-1911, pp. 171, 179, Matamata-Piako District Council Archives, Te Aroha.

again sought assistance, at Moss' suggestion the council asked the government to assist driving a 30-foot low level.²¹³ It declined.²¹⁴

Jansen was obtaining some gold, for early in 1904 he sold 3oz 15dwt of melted gold.²¹⁵ In April, James Coutts, mining inspector, certified that Jansen was 'a bona fide prospector' who wanted 'a parcel of ore tested at the Thames School of Mines in accordance with the Council of Mines' offer' to treat ore 'at the bare cost of wages and materials used'.²¹⁶ It was sent in June to the experimental plant to be treated 'by Cyanide, if possible', the first time Te Aroha ore was tested there by this process. One of the three parcels returned 36s per ounce, the other two 53s.²¹⁷ In December, Jansen wanted to send from 30 to 50 tons. The small lots he had earlier tested gave from 1oz to 7 1/2dwt to the load, which meant that 'i get but very little out of it for my trouble and i have to earn enough otherwise to keep me going at other work'. As 'i am only a poor working man', he requested free carriage.²¹⁸ Coutts advised that Jansen had given 'a good deal of trouble before. He thought all he had to do was to send quartz to be treated whenever he liked'. As he was 'not a practical miner', Coutts considered 'it would take him a long time to break out 50 tons'. However, he recommended that Jansen be given free rail cartage of one ton, which was agreed to.²¹⁹

²¹³ R.T. Jansen to F.W. Wild (Town Clerk), 17 November 1903, Mines Department, MD 1, 09/699, ANZ-W; Te Aroha Borough Council, Minutes of Meeting of 18 November 1903, Minutes of Meetings 1898-1911, p. 196, Matamata-Piako District Council Archives, Te Aroha.

²¹⁴ Under-Secretary, Mines Department, to F.W. Wild, 25 November 1903, Mines Department, MD 1, 09/699, ANZ-W.

²¹⁵ Bank of New Zealand, Thames Branch, Gold Purchase Register 1899-1932, entry for 11 February 1904, Bank of New Zealand Archives, Wellington.

²¹⁶ James Coutts to Director, Thames School of Mines, 30 April 1904, Inspector of Mines, Thames, Letterbook 1903-1906, p. 112, YBAZ 1240/3, ANZ-A.

²¹⁷ Thames School of Mines, Experimental Plant Record Book 1896-1916, entry for 13 June 1904, School of Mines Archives, Thames.

²¹⁸ R.T. Jansen to Minister of Mines, 27 December 1904, Mines Department, MD 1, 09/699, ANZ-W.

²¹⁹ James Coutts to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 23 January 1905; Under-Secretary, Mines Department, to R.T. Jansen, 27 January 1905, Mines Department, MD 1, 09/699, ANZ-W.

In November 1903, Jansen had again applied for his claim, but his application lapsed.²²⁰ He applied again the following February, but this time for a special quartz claim because the survey had revealed the area to be ten acres; this larger area was granted in August.²²¹ Unasked, Jansen kept the Minister informed of his progress. In April 1905, he reported that six parcels were being sent for treatment. ‘i hope they will be particular about it in some of the ore i crushed Mr Mariss²²² says there is a mineral more value than the Gold in it’.²²³ No more was heard of this mysterious mineral, but in July, when he had another eight tons ready to be sent,²²⁴ because he had no means he petitioned the Goldfields and Mines Committee of parliament for assistance with driving 100 feet.²²⁵ He stated that his four trial crushings, amounting in all to 17 1/2 tons, had produced 7oz 16dwt of bullion, worth £19 16s 3d.²²⁶ The Under-Secretary of Mines advised the committee that assistance would be considered if tests at the School of Mines showed the ore to be payable. He also pointed out that the borough council could assist.²²⁷ The following month, Jansen informed the Minister that five and a half tons had returned 1oz 2dwt of gold. ‘We had a little trouble with it i had about 20ozs of amalgam off the plates and in the cleaning and squeezing it reduced considerable it was like a bit of putty it seems there is some mineral of some description in it that sickens the Silver’ [quicksilver, otherwise mercury]. He intended to roast another sample, hoping to detect this mineral, and requested free carriage to Thames of three or four tons.²²⁸ He was permitted to send another truckload

²²⁰ Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Mining Applications 1903, 86/1903, BBAV 11289/17a, ANZ-A.

²²¹ Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Mining Applications 1904, 3/1904, BBAV 11289/18a, ANZ-A.

²²² Not identified.

²²³ R.T. Jansen to Minister of Mines, 4 April 1905, Mines Department, MD 1, 09/699, ANZ-W.

²²⁴ R.T. Jansen to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 7 July 1905, Mines Department, MD 1, 09/699, ANZ-W.

²²⁵ Memorandum by Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 15 July 1905, Mines Department, MD 1, 09/669, ANZ-W.

²²⁶ *Te Aroha News*, 11 July 1905, p. 2.

²²⁷ Under-Secretary, Mines Department, to Clerk of House of Representatives, 17 July 1905, Mines Department, MD 1, 09/699, ANZ-W.

²²⁸ R.T. Jansen to Minister of Mines, 28 August 1905, Mines Department, MD 1, 09/699, ANZ-W.

without charge if Coutts approved.²²⁹ Coutts reported that Jansen had been prospecting land adjoining the domain 'for some years past at intervals as his means would allow', without much success. As Coutts had visited when the drive had fallen in because of heavy rain, he could not check the reef. Several trial crushings had been made, one producing over an ounce to the load; he recommended free carriage of one truck.²³⁰

The department agreed, but instead, Jansen sent three boxes for assay at the Mines Department Laboratory in Wellington, asking whether they contained a payable amount of copper.²³¹ Five assays revealed that the largest amount of copper was 0.83%, with minimal amounts of bullion, making it unpayable: the highest value was 3s 4d.²³² Undeterred, in January 1906 Jansen sought assistance in driving a low level to prove whether the reef went down. Should it do so, and was payable, he would erect a five-stamp battery. 'I am only a poor working man saving a little at times to help to prove the ground', and sending ore to Thames cost so much that he received no return. The council was unable to assist because 'they say they are bankrupt'.²³³ What they really told him was 'that though the Council would be willing to help him' they were 'unable to do so owing to straightened finances'.²³⁴ The Mines Department informed him that his application could not 'be entertained'.²³⁵

Lacking financial resources, it made sense for Jansen to acquire a sleeping partner. In late 1903 he had expected 'a gentleman to assist him in erecting a small crushing plant' if this unnamed person was 'satisfied with

²²⁹ Under-Secretary, Mines Department, to R.T. Jansen, 1 September 1905, Mines Department, MD 1, 06/699, ANZ-A.

²³⁰ James Coutts to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 11 September 1905, Mines Department, MD 1, 09/699, ANZ-W.

²³¹ R.T. Jansen to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 29 October 1905, Mines Department, MD 1, 09/699, ANZ-W.

²³² Assays by Mines Department Laboratory, 27 November 1905, Mines Department, MD 1, 09/699, ANZ-W.

²³³ R.T. Jansen to Minister of Mines, 7 January 1906, Mines Department, MD 1, 09/699, ANZ-W.

²³⁴ Te Aroha Borough Council, Minutes of Meeting of 27 September 1905, Minutes of Meetings 1898-1911, p. 278, Matamata-Piako District Council Archives, Te Aroha.

²³⁵ Under-Secretary, Mines Department, to R.T. Jansen, 16 January 1906, Mines Department, MD 1, 09/699, ANZ-W.

the stone'.²³⁶ As no assistance was given, this potential partner was not convinced the ore was payable. At the end of April 1906, Jansen transferred half his property to a printer and newspaper owner, William McCullough,²³⁷ for the nominal amount of £20.²³⁸ The property was divided, Jansen having ten acres as the Success and McCullough the other ten as the Success Extended.²³⁹ They were to work the two halves jointly.²⁴⁰ McCullough acquired a machine site and water race license and obtained protection for six months to enable him to test the ore in Andrew Tait Walker Allan's new gold saving invention.²⁴¹ If a trial run of from 80 to 100 loads warranted it, McCullough would raise the capital needed for a small battery.²⁴² McCullough, who was 'always willing to help a genuine venture', had already erected one of Allan's machines near the claim, 'at considerable expense'.²⁴³ McCullough was associated with Allan in the development of the new invention,²⁴⁴ and, as he owned the *Thames Star*, his newspaper had been publicizing it for some time.²⁴⁵ It also reprinted an article written by a *Te Aroha News* reporter who visited the ground in June:²⁴⁶

The mine is situated on the hillside to the south of the Hot Springs No. 2 reserve, and is a special claim of five acres in

²³⁶ Minister of Mines to E.G.B. Moss, 7 September 1903, Mines Department, MD 1, 09/669, ANZ-W.

²³⁷ See *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*, vol. 2, p. 96.

²³⁸ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Register of Licensed Holdings and Special Claims 1887-1909, folio 171, 11500/8b; Transfer dated 28 April 1906, 11/1906, BBAV 11289/18a, ANZ-A.

²³⁹ *AJHR*, 1907, C-3, p. 49 [for plan of the claims, see Appendix].

²⁴⁰ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1906, 9/1906, BBAV 11289/18a, ANZ-A.

²⁴¹ For details of Allan and his inventions, see chapter on prospectors' and miners' skills in general and Te Aroha in particular.

²⁴² Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1906, 10, 11, 29, 41/1906, BBAV 11290/18a, ANZ-A.

²⁴³ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Register of Mining Privileges 1893-1910, folios 208, 209, BBAV 11500/2a, ANZ-A; Te Aroha Correspondent, *Ohinemuri Gazette*, 20 June 1906, p. 2.

²⁴⁴ Register of Patents 1905-1906, p. 127, no. 20115, Patent Office, PC 10/19, ANZ-W.

²⁴⁵ See in particular *Thames Star*, 4 February 1905, p. 1, 10 March 1906, p. 2, 12 March 1906, p. 2; for later publicity, see 13 October 1906, p. 2.

²⁴⁶ Which otherwise would have been lost to posterity, the fate of the rest of the *Te Aroha News* for that year.

extent. The portion to receive earliest attention will be what was known about ten years ago during the boom as the Old Taranaki claim. At this part there is an old drive which will be opened up, besides a new one which has been started, there being a reef of quartz 14 feet wide running diagonally into the hill. A recent assay of this stone yielded as high as £3 17s per ton, and the loose dirt in its present condition will yield about 14s 6d.

A specially noteworthy feature here is Allan's gold saver, of which this is the first machine to be worked in public. The machine is of a very compact design, and utilises the principle of retaining the gold by means of adherence to amalgamating copper plates. From the Old Taranaki drive there is a chute extending about 350 feet down the hill to a stage, below which a flume of running water carries the dirt a further 250ft to the machine. Along the flume there is a coarse grizzly, and a fine one at the machine. This machine is equal to treating forty loads per day. (A load equals 1 1/2 ton.)... Unfortunately the trial of the machine has been delayed owing to the fact that Mr Allan has been indisposed. He is now well again, and it is expected that he will be able to superintend the running of the machine early next week.

Further round the hill is another drive from which dirt had yielded 1oz 5dwt per load. This reef is four feet wide.

The Borough Council has formed a pathway up the hill, continuing Burke-street towards the mine.

The trial is now anxiously awaited, and if the result is pronounced to be satisfactory the plant will be extended and a battery of stampers erected besides other improvements. The present water supply is from a small creek some little distance away, the water will be returned to that creek after the tailings have been settled out.

For the good of the district and everybody concerned, we trust that the report will be a most satisfactory one.²⁴⁷

This article was typical of the constant local hope for the development of a successful mine; a month later a Te Aroha correspondent raised anticipation further:

A parcel of dirt has been treated by "Allan's Gold Saver," which has given most satisfactory results, so much so that the owners of the mine have decided to spend a few hundred pounds in development and to work the same systematically. If the ore shapes as well when they get the lode in solid country as it is shaping on the surface, a complete crushing plant will be installed. This promising scheme will be of benefit to the whole district.

²⁴⁷ *Te Aroha News*, n.d., reprinted in *Thames Star*, 12 June 1906, p. 2.

Mr Allan, the inventor of the gold saver, superintended the first run on the machine. A large quantity of mixed dirt was put down the sluice, the final portion passing through the machine with a satisfactory result, which Mr Allan declares is beyond his expectation.²⁴⁸

No details were given of these 'most satisfactory results'. In the following March, Jansen tried 'canvassing the business people of Te Aroha with a view to raising a sum of about £20 with which to purchase a single stamp crushing plant' to test this and other claims, claiming that the Success had been proved to be profitable.²⁴⁹ Shortly afterwards, it was announced that he had been 'unable to raise by subscription, the full amount required'.²⁵⁰ The local Member of Parliament, William Herries (who did not invest in any mines), collected some contributions, and announced that he would seek a subsidy because the plant might encourage others to prospect.²⁵¹ Jansen had already asked the Minister to meet half the amount to avoid having to send ore to Thames.²⁵² A local correspondent considered that, as Jansen appeared 'to have such faith in the mine', he deserved 'a chance to have finally demonstrated' whether there was gold 'in payable quantities'.²⁵³

Coutts reported that he had not taken up the 1905 offer of free cartage of one truck to Thames. 'He appears to me to have a craze for gold-mining but he is not what I would call a practical miner, and is carried away with wild fancies'. A small testing plant would be of no use, and Jansen had done little work.²⁵⁴ Accordingly, his request was declined, prompting another that he be allowed 12 months' free rent. In support, he claimed that the five lots of ore tested in Wellington had given a return of from 7 1/2dwt to 1oz 5dwt per load,²⁵⁵ which was incorrect: the highest amount of gold was 11

²⁴⁸ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Thames Star*, 13 July 1906, p. 2.

²⁴⁹ *Te Aroha News*, 5 March 1907, p. 2.

²⁵⁰ *Te Aroha News*, 23 March 1907, p. 2.

²⁵¹ *Te Aroha News*, 26 March 1907, p. 2, 4 April 1907, p. 2.

²⁵² R.T. Jansen to Minister of Mines, 7 March 1907, Mines Department, MD 1, 09/669, ANZ-W.

²⁵³ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Thames Star*, 6 April 1907, p. 1.

²⁵⁴ James Coutts to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 4 April 1907, Mines Department, MD 1, 09/669, ANZ-W.

²⁵⁵ R.T. Jansen to Minister of Mines, 3 June 1907, Mines Department, MD 1, 09/699, ANZ-W.

grains and the lowest nil. If he was implying a return for bullion, the results for silver combined with the results for gold still did not match these figures.²⁵⁶ Whether anyone checked the earlier result or not, under the regulations his request could not be granted, and was not.

At the end of 1906, McCullough's Success Extended was protected and only Jansen's Success was being worked.²⁵⁷ According to the *Te Aroha News*, Jansen acquired the sole interest in the ground from McCullough early the following March.²⁵⁸ According to warden's court records, not till mid-October did McCullough formally abandon his claim, telling the warden: 'I have done with Jansen & have handed back the half interest in the Success & the water race. My efforts to help him & Te Aroha has cost me £54.0.0. All I got back was my machine. He Jansen will not pay half of the cost of the timber a/c, or buy it'.²⁵⁹

Despite this failure to retain his sleeping partner or to raise funds from the community to erect his testing battery, Jansen retained his mine. In December 1908, the local newspaper reported that he had 'been picking away at his claim' and had found 'some likely looking quartz', of which five tons had been sent for treatment at Thames.²⁶⁰ No result was reported publicly or in the records of the School of Mines, and to earn some additional income that month he became the registrar of dogs.²⁶¹ Two months later, it was reported that he had done a lot of work single-handedly, and in January 1909 had taken samples to the School of Mines, where they were found to be suitable for treatment with cyanide. A few tons would, therefore, be treated by this method.²⁶² Nothing further was heard of these tests. In June, Jansen offered a selection of minerals for display at the Waikato show, and in September he presented his quartz specimens for display in the 'Tourist Building' in the domain.²⁶³ Two months later, the last report published about Jansen's mine claimed that it was 'situated in a

²⁵⁶ Assays by Mines Department Laboratory, 27 November 1905, Mines Department, MD 1, 09/699, ANZ-W.

²⁵⁷ *AJHR*, 1907, C-3, p. 49; *New Zealand Mines Record*, 16 March 1907, p. 346.

²⁵⁸ *Te Aroha News*, 5 March 1907, p. 2.

²⁵⁹ William McCullough to Warden, 16 October 1907, Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications, 28/1907, BBAV 11289/19a, ANZ-A.

²⁶⁰ *Te Aroha News*, 15 December 1908, p. 3.

²⁶¹ *Te Aroha News*, 17 December 1908, p. 2.

²⁶² *Te Aroha News*, 4 February 1909, p. 3.

²⁶³ *Te Aroha News*, 1 June 1909, p. 2, 4 September 1909, p. 2.

likely spot to prove remunerative'.²⁶⁴ Presumably he continued working it when able to, but at the end of March 1911, when he was a labourer near Thames, he was admitted to hospital.²⁶⁵ He died a week later of diabetes, aged 46, his occupation on the death certificate being given as farmer.²⁶⁶

UNDER-CAPITALISED MINERS: GEORGE ERNEST HYDE

In the twentieth century, with goldmining generally in decline except in rare places such as Waihi, individual miners and small companies found it even more difficult to raise finance to enable them to work their claims. When George Ernest Hyde,²⁶⁷ backed by a Hamilton syndicate,²⁶⁸ worked the Peter Maxwell ground near the highest point of the mountain in the late 1920s, they spent a 'considerable amount of money' attempting to intersect the reef, using all their funds.²⁶⁹ Hyde informed the warden that his syndicate had raised and spent £1,250. 'We had difficulties in driving tunnel, raised another £300 more capital and spent it. Tried a prospectus for £20,000. This was just before Coy closed down'.²⁷⁰ In 1926 his special quartz claim had been acquired by the Peter Maxwell Company for £1,250, half its capital, payable by the allotment of 5,000 fully paid up shares. In addition to his half of the company, his wife and other family members purchased shares.²⁷¹

When seeking government assistance in 1928 to enable him to complete testing the property, Hyde wrote that, in a 12-month period over 1926 to 1927, he had spent £1,550 to enable himself and two or three others to work continuously at 'pioneer mining'. Unforeseen legal complications

²⁶⁴ *Te Aroha News*, 20 November 1909, p. 3.

²⁶⁵ Thames Hospital, Fees Register 1910-1912, entry for 29 March 1911, YCAH A431/73, ANZ-A.

²⁶⁶ Death Certificate of Richard Thomas Jensen, 5 April 1911, 1911/4051, BDM.

²⁶⁷ For his abilities as a miner, see Mines Department, MD 1, 10/9/50, 16/76, ANZ-W; *Auckland Weekly News*, 13 February 1913, p. 36.

²⁶⁸ See Prospectus of Peter Maxwell Gold Mining Company, 7 June 1927, Mines Department, MD 1, 10/9/50, ANZ-W.

²⁶⁹ F.G. Dunn to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 15 December 1926; Matthew Paul to Warden, 16 August 1927, Mines Department, MD 1, 10/9/50, ANZ-W.

²⁷⁰ Evidence of G.E. Hyde, Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1927-1933, Complaint 21/1928, BCDG 11289/2a, ANZ-A.

²⁷¹ Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 513 no. 3024, ANZ-A.

preventing the formation of a company meant that ‘work had to be suspended due to lack of capital when only the dead development work had been nearly completed’. He believed the drive had stopped about 15 feet from the reef.²⁷² The mining inspector warned his department that earlier samples had proved the ore to be ‘most erratic in value’ and that Hyde had obtained capital by producing picked stone with high values. ‘In my opinion sufficient work was not done in the surface levels to prove this lode before going to the expense of driving a low level through firm country’. As in other instances, he recommended that a small subsidy be granted to enable Hyde (and the department) to discover whether the low level would strike any pockets of good ore.²⁷³ A subsidy to assist driving 50 feet was not taken up,²⁷⁴ and because he had ceased working the ground, it was forfeited. Hyde explained that he had formed a company which hoped to raise £20,000, ‘but the times were very hard for mining brokerage and the venture failed. The mine wanted capital to work it properly. He himself was prepared to work it with a few hundred pounds but that was not what was wanted. Altogether he and his friends had sunk £1,650’ into the mine, £100 more than he had told the Mines Department earlier in the year. ‘He did not blame any one trying to “jump” the claim’, admitting he had not worked it ‘recently owing to money and times being very hard’.²⁷⁵ He had lost ‘a considerable amount of money’.²⁷⁶

MINERS WITHOUT ADEQUATE CAPITAL

Sometimes miners made extravagant promises of the amount of capital they would invest, and then sought protection while they attempted to raise it. For example, Kimokimo Pepene,²⁷⁷ when he applied for a special claim in

²⁷² G.E. Hyde to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 21 February 1928, Mines Department, MD 1, 10/9/50, ANZ-W.

²⁷³ Matthew Paul to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 28 March 1928, Mines Department, MD 1, 10/9/50, ANZ-W.

²⁷⁴ Memorandum of 11 April 1928; J.F. Downey to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 4 November 1929, Mines Department, MD 1, 10/9/50, ANZ-W.

²⁷⁵ *Te Aroha News*, 12 December 1928, p. 4.

²⁷⁶ *Te Aroha Warden’s Court*, Mining Applications 1930, 20/1930, BCDG 11289/2a, ANZ-A.

²⁷⁷ See Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Books, no. 14, pp. 185-186; no. 23, pp. 15-16, 18-19; no. 28, pp. 13-14; no. 49, pp. 342-344, 349; *Ohinemuri Gazette*, 11 December 1922, p. 2.

1897, deposed that he would invest £5,000.²⁷⁸ One miner and inventor, Andrew Tait Walker Allan,²⁷⁹ when applying for an 80-acre special claim near Te Aroha in January 1898 claimed that he would invest £5,000.²⁸⁰ Once the license was granted, he occupied the ground on 25 July, but did not work it, explaining in another application dated 5 September that ‘a large capital’ was needed. He had ‘been in negotiation with’ Joseph Campbell²⁸¹ ‘for the introduction of Capital’, but as this would take time no work was possible for six months. He was granted five months’ protection.²⁸² During this period, he prospected the ground on behalf of a local syndicate,²⁸³ presumably the potential providers of the mythical £5,000. One man, opposed to the ‘dog in the manger’ behaviour of those who did not work their ground despite receiving a license upon a promise to spend a specified amount of money, argued that this ‘should be spent or a very good reason given as to why work to the extent of the sum named was not carried out’.²⁸⁴ An Ohinemuri newspaper commented that, after the 1886 Mining Act was passed, the amount given in the application for a licensed holding was usually small, because licensees believed they were required to spend it. ‘Now, however, you see £200,000 – more or less – “proposed to be expended” by some deadbeat who has pegged out a chunk of rock ... with an idea to sell it to a “shindy-kit” ’ [syndicate].²⁸⁵

Much larger mythical amounts were promised during the boom of the 1890s, prompting a Paeroa newspaper to complain about claims being granted too freely. ‘In most cases the capital is stated at from £50,000 to £250,000; the naked fact being probably the applicant does not own the shirt on his back and has raised the deposit money from credulous people’.²⁸⁶ McCombie, writing in 1891, commented on the large number of small claims taken up throughout the peninsula during the past 12 months:

²⁷⁸ Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Applications for Licensed Holdings and Special Claims 1895-1898, application for Omahu Special Claim dated 2 March 1897, BBAV 11582/4a, ANZ-A.

²⁷⁹ See earlier section of this paper on Allan and Richard Thomas Jensen.

²⁸⁰ Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Applications for Licensed Holdings and Special Claims 1895-1898, 2/1898, BBAV 11582/4a, ANZ-A.

²⁸¹ See paper on Joseph Campbell and his thermo-hyperphoric process.

²⁸² Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Mining Applications 1898, 42/1898, BBAV 11582/4a, ANZ-A.

²⁸³ *Te Aroha News*, n.d., reprinted in *Thames Advertiser*, 16 January 1899, p. 3.

²⁸⁴ Letter from ‘Via Justitia’, *Thames Advertiser*, 13 May 1891, p. 2.

²⁸⁵ *Ohinemuri Gazette*, n.d., cited in *Thames Advertiser*, 26 September 1892, p. 2.

²⁸⁶ *Hauraki Tribune*, n.d., reprinted in *Observer*, 13 March 1897, p. 4.

Most of these have been floated into companies with a working capital which did not amount to more than two hundred pounds per claim, on the average. How many of these have realised expectations? and was it not absurd to expect results as the outcome of investing just about enough money to liquidate preliminary expenses? If the whole of this money had been “pooled” and devoted to the systematic working of two or three large areas there might possibly be a different tale to tell to-day. At all events, the shareholders would now have the satisfaction of knowing that their money had been judicially expended instead of being frittered away in futile attempts at mining in a small way, on small claims, with small capital, which damned the whole concern at the very outset by its own insignificance, and yet it is a case of “go thou and do likewise,” because mining men will not profit by experience, even supposing they get it at the expense of others.²⁸⁷

If under-capitalized mines did not produce payable ore quickly, small claimholders and any companies they had formed were soon forced to abandon their ground, as illustrated in all the chapters on Te Aroha mining. As another example, in 1895 a story was published about a lode once found by John Ryan, a miner and farmer,²⁸⁸ 500 feet up the hillside behind Te Aroha. ‘Many years ago Ryan and party put in a drive on the footwall, from which they sent six bags of ore for treatment to the Moanataiari battery (Thames), and it returned 3oz to the ton. Encouraged, they attempted a low level tunnel, but had to stop for want of funds’.²⁸⁹

Regulations requiring full manning of the ground, with failure to do making a party liable to having their claim jumped, was seen as a costly burden. Another cost for small parties was the initial development, one observer recommending that it made sense for adjoining claims to be opened up by a joint adit rather than each party having to drive one.²⁹⁰ Occasionally this did happen, as in the case of the development of the Waitoki and Werahiko claims at Waiorongomai.²⁹¹

²⁸⁷ ‘Aboriginal’, ‘Auckland News’, *Thames Advertiser*, 2 May 1891, p. 2.

²⁸⁸ See *Te Aroha News*, 23 March 1917, p. 2, 26 March 1920, p. 2, 16 April 1920, p. 2, 23 January 1929, p. 4.

²⁸⁹ *New Zealand Mining Standard*, 27 February 1897, p. 5.

²⁹⁰ ‘Native’, ‘On the Marototo Diggings: Around the Camp Fire’, *Thames Advertiser*, 10 October 1887, p. 2.

²⁹¹ See paper on the Silver King mine at Waiorongomai.

PROTECTION

As illustrated in the accounts of Hughes, Burke, and Jansen, the usual consequence of having insufficient capital was applications for protection. In 1894 McCombie wrote that, from his experience of quartz mining over 26 years, in 95 cases out of 100 ‘want of money to carry on with’ was why miners sought this.²⁹² Critics considered the system of granting protection was seriously flawed, resulting in mines being shepherded, as one wrote in 1897:

Every office boy in Auckland has his “special claim” somewhere, and the Government allows these claims to be shepherded as long as the owner likes. He had only to go before the Warden and swear that his claim is “under offer” to obtain exemption from the Labour Laws for six months. The whole peninsula is blocked out into claims, “special” or otherwise, and upon nine-tenths no genuine work is being done. I have ridden hundreds, I might almost say thousands, of miles in New Zealand, and I have seen hundreds of such claims.²⁹³

Should the warden consider that insufficient work had been done, he would refuse protection. This happened in 1899 to Daniel Redwood,²⁹⁴ who applied for six months’ protection because of needing time to obtain more capital after having prospected his two Waiorongomai properties for only three months.²⁹⁵ By contrast, John McLeod Murray,²⁹⁶ when seeking three months’ protection on 31 July 1888 for his Anglesea claim there, declared that he had worked it continuously since first occupying it on 25 April. As he had driven 150 feet before running out of funds, his application was

²⁹² ‘Aboriginal’, ‘Quartz-Mining and Capital’, *Auckland Weekly News*, 14 April 1894, p. 37.

²⁹³ *Financial Times* (London), 3 September 1897, reprinted in *Thames Advertiser*, 11 October 1897, p. 4, and Radclyffe, p. 140.

²⁹⁴ See *Te Aroha News*, 24 October 1885, pp. 2, 7, Piako County Council, 4 December 1886, p. 2, Piako County Council, 26 February 1887, p. 2, 21 May 1887, p. 2, 13 April 1889, p. 2.

²⁹⁵ Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Mining Applications 1899, 7, 8/1899, BBAV 11582/4a, ANZ-A.

²⁹⁶ See paper on William Archibald Murray.

granted.²⁹⁷ As Murray was not a miner but a storekeeper and accountant who invested in local mining,²⁹⁸ he may have employed someone to work it.

Protecting large areas led to complaints that miners were thrown out of work, although in 1897 one Te Aroha mining correspondent argued for the needs of that field:

The utmost leniency should be shown to *bona fide* owners of claims on the ranges here, and that the labour clauses of the Mining Act should be construed as liberally as possible in favour of the present holders. On any goldfield where complex refractory ores occur time should be ladled out to owners who are doing any kind of genuine development work with liberality. At Waiorongomai and at a few claims north of it ores lending themselves to ordinary treatment are found; but the great bulk of the stuff here is not amenable to the ordinary methods in vogue. If the Warden dealt harshly with owners on this field two-thirds of the claims would, perforce, be abandoned. What would happen to the best of them it requires no great stretch of imagination to conceive. They would indubitably fall into the hands of foreign capitalists, nor would local owners reap a pennyworth of advantage from the developments they had spent their substance in carrying out.²⁹⁹

SHEPHERDING

If granted too readily, protection created complaints that unworked land was being ‘shepherded’, meaning locked up for speculation. For instance, in 1882 the *Thames Star* heard of ‘three of four large leases’ at Owharoa ‘whose owners are anxiously waiting for something to turn up in their neighbour’s ground’.³⁰⁰ Any such discovery would enable the shepherd to sell his property for a quick profit. Any actions against this practice were praised, as for instance in Ohinemuri in 1884:

²⁹⁷ Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Mining Applications 1888, Application dated 31 July 1888, BBAV 11289/1a; Hearings 1883-1900, 64/1888, BBAV 11505/1a, ANZ-A.

²⁹⁸ See *Te Aroha News*, 22 March 1884, p. 2, 7 March 1885, p. 7, 23 January 1886, p. 2, 20 February 1886, p. 2, 3 July 1886, p. 2, 9 October 1886, p. 2, 16 October 1886, p. 2, advertisement, 15 January 1887, p. 3, 12 March 1887, 2, 7 May 1887, p. 3, 27 August 1887, p. 2, Town Board, 7 January 1888, p. 2, Town Board, 11 August 1888, p. 2, Town Board, 14 November 1888, p. 2.

²⁹⁹ ‘Werahiko’, ‘Our Te Aroha Letter’, *Mining Standard*, 27 April 1897, pp. 3-4.

³⁰⁰ *Thames Star*, 5 September 1882, p. 2.

The Warden marked his disapproval of the system of wholesale shepherding of ground yesterday by imposing substantial penalties in a number of cases ... in which the defendants had taken up claims and endeavoured to hold them without either registration, manning, or applying for licenses.... It had been noticeable that at Rotokohu and Karangahake, where good finds have been made, the neighbouring ground had been taken up by men who had clearly no intention of work, but who wished to benefit by other people's operations.

Although all the ground at Rotokohu was occupied, only six men were at work. 'The system was inimical to the interests of bona fide miners, and must be discouraged'.³⁰¹ The following year, Warden Kenrick opposed the practice at Karangahake of taking up ground but not working it. 'He did not intend to encourage this by granting protection too readily, for he noticed that in most instances the men who took up ground were those who already held considerable areas, and who simply wanted to increase the extent of their properties'.³⁰²

Unworked ground prompted regular complaints. For instance, in 1883 the *Thames Advertiser* complained about shareholders holding ground 'merely for the purpose of hanging on till something good is struck in an adjacent mine, and then making a "rise" by selling out'.³⁰³ In 1895, the same newspaper declared itself to have 'every sympathy with the "poor miner" or prospector in his objection to this wholesale disposition of gold-bearing lands, thereby shutting up legitimate prospecting'.³⁰⁴ 'Thistledown' complained to the *Te Aroha News* that protection was misused. The legal limit was 'practically a dead end' and large areas were 'locked up for speculative purposes, and when a plaint is lodged, the cry of "English capital" is always good enough for further protection'. Any fines for shepherding were merely nominal.³⁰⁵ The *Observer* agreed:

It is a scandal that for years past some of the best and most valuable properties at the Thames, Coromandel, and the Upper

³⁰¹ *Thames Advertiser*, 8 April 1884, p. 2; see also letter from 'Quorum Pars Foi', *Auckland Weekly News*, 21 August 1886, p. 15.

³⁰² *Thames Advertiser*, 10 August 1885, p. 3.

³⁰³ *Thames Advertiser*, 21 July 1883, p. 2.

³⁰⁴ Editorial, *Thames Advertiser*, 28 January 1895, p. 2.

³⁰⁵ Letter from 'Thistledown', *Te Aroha News*, 27 April 1895, p. 2.

Thames have been simply shepherded by speculators in the expectation of future profit by company-promoting on the English market. This is not right. It is a system calculated to lock up the richest of all our latent resources, to discourage legitimate mining enterprise amongst our young men, and to retard the progress of the whole district.... The law never contemplated that a system should be tolerated under which moneyed speculators could establish a corner in mining properties, and hold them without legitimate working.³⁰⁶

English investors objected to the ease with which speculators could ‘take up an area and then go about levying blackmail on those who want it for genuine mining purposes by forcing them either to buy the lease from him at a fancy price or else to go without’.³⁰⁷ Edward Kersey Cooper wrote to the *Mining Journal* of London describing three kinds of leaseholders. There was one who worked his mines,

another who conducts his operations with a pen and ink or typewriter, and lastly the plausible romancer, who, with the assistance of his solicitor, manages to hold on to large acreages (which are always for sale) by securing protection for non-working for as many and as long periods as ingenuity and resource and invention enables him to deceive the Warden.

The latter two were ‘simply incubuses – the drone in the industrial hive, and their nefarious ways should be discouraged in every possible way. Protection for non-working must be done away with’.³⁰⁸ The *Te Aroha News* wanted unworked claims forfeited to enable prospectors to test them. ‘When the labour conditions are systematically and continuously avoided, it may be taken for granted the ground is held solely with a view of making a rise from the unearned increment, that no mineral worth exists, or that the lessees are unable to obtain that which does exist’.³⁰⁹ Richard Seddon, when at Waiorongomai in 1891, stated that from there to Coromandel, as throughout the colony, ‘there were monopolies held by middlemen,

³⁰⁶ *Observer*, 6 April 1895, p. 2.

³⁰⁷ London Correspondent, *Auckland Weekly News*, 4 January 1896, p. 21.

³⁰⁸ Letter from E.K. Cooper, *Mining Journal*, n.d., reprinted in *Thames Star*, 19 September 1900, p. 3.

³⁰⁹ Editorial, *Te Aroha News*, 1 March 1890, p. 2.

parasites, who had no intention of working the ground, but were holding to sell to capitalists or otherwise for speculative purposes'.³¹⁰

In 1888, Warden Northcroft referred to one method of shepherding:

It was well-known that once he granted a license for a holding he expected it to be at least partially manned. In order, however, to hold the ground for as long a period as possible without having to do any work upon it, he was well aware that applicants frequently instructed their surveyor not to hurry with the survey. There were scores of men in this district who gave instructions to that effect.³¹¹

He warned those not working their ground that they were liable to forfeit it, a policy applauded by the press.³¹² Requesting surveyors to delay completing surveys continued, meaning 'very large areas' were 'locked up almost indefinitely' because the warden could not grant a license until they were 'finished and returned from the Survey Office in Auckland, as being correct'. The *Thames Star* supported the Miners' Union suggestion requiring surveys to be completed within a month of application.³¹³

Warden Bush became aware, in 1897, that many applicants for ground had their applications adjourned because not all the cost of surveying had been paid. He told the chief surveyor in Auckland that he considered this 'to be a way of getting protection'. When ground was applied for, a fixed time was allowed to complete the survey, but when the plan was produced in the warden's court the costs had not all been paid and an adjournment was granted. 'This simply means that so long as the applicant does not pay this small sum, he keeps the land locked up, and pays no rent for it'; he knew of ground being thus locked up for a year.³¹⁴ The chief surveyor responded that this was 'one of the most ingenious ways of shepherding a claim' he had 'ever yet heard of' in 30 years' experience in mining districts, and agreed

³¹⁰ *Auckland Weekly News*, 16 May 1891, p. 30.

³¹¹ *Te Aroha News*, 25 August 1888, p. 2.

³¹² For example, editorial, *Thames Advertiser*, 13 July 1888, p. 2.

³¹³ Editorial, *Thames Star*, 13 May 1891, p. 2.

³¹⁴ R.S. Bush (Warden) to Gerhard Mueller (Chief Surveyor, Auckland), 7 April 1897, Goldfields: General: 1896-1899, Lands and Survey Department, BAAZ 1108, 160/4433, ANZ-A.

that if money not paid by a certain date, the claim should be forfeited.³¹⁵ When told yet again that ‘arrangements were being made to procure the necessary capital to properly develop the ground’, Bush told promoters ‘that in future he must have definite information as to the nature of these alleged negotiations’. Some applications for protection ‘extended over a couple of years’ without appearing to come any nearer to completion. ‘He would like it known that in future he must have definite information so that he will be able to judge as to the “bona fides” of the reported negotiations’.³¹⁶ Bush exposed another form of shepherding when in 1901 he wondered at shareholders either letting mines on tribute or paying calls in unprofitable mines. He believed that they used the tribute system ‘to keep the property’, and a solicitor ‘suggested that the element of gambling had something to do with shareholders hanging on’.³¹⁷ Warden Northcroft, his successor, was very reluctant to recommend six months protection while capital was raised to float a company. ‘He did not consider such a declaration sufficient, and he thought that before a person floated a company he should expend a certain amount of capital in developing the ground to prove the property to be worth placing on the market as a genuine mining venture’ and not a ‘wild cat’.³¹⁸

In 1905, James Coutts, the mining inspector, wrote a personal letter to the Minister of Mines:

From time to time I hear expressions of dissatisfaction about the large areas of ground that are held as Mining Licenses on which no work is done ... the same being held simply for speculative purposes, as the people who take up the ground have no intention of putting their own money into it or yet working it themselves. As soon as the ground is pegged of, surveyed and the License is granted an application is put into the Warden for absolute protection for six months to allow them time to raise capital to work the claim. At the end of this period a fresh application is made for a further six months protection (on the same grounds as the previous one) which the Warden frequently recommends to the Hon the Minister of Mines to be granted. When this protection has expired and they find that they cannot get further protection they apply to the Warden for permission to work with a

³¹⁵ Gerhard Mueller to R.W. Bush, 13 April 1897, Goldfields: General: 1896-1899, Lands and Survey Department, BAAZ 1108, 160/4433, ANZ-A.

³¹⁶ *Thames Advertiser*, 2 July 1897, p. 2.

³¹⁷ *Thames Star*, 2 April 1901, p. 2.

³¹⁸ *Auckland Weekly News*, 30 April 1908, p. 19.

reduced number of men, generally two, and they make an affidavit before a J.P. to the effect that not more than two (2) men can be advantageously employed (in most cases) on 100 acres of ground, which cannot be termed anything else but an untruthful statement. Then again when the six month's partial protection has expired they again apply for absolute protection for [an]other six months, and to all appearance may go on for any length of time if something is not done to prevent it.

The reason for holding on to the ground is obvious, it is done for the person of keeping it in their names until what is termed another boom comes when they will dispose of it to the English bidder, therefore when a person or Syndicate is prepared to work or would like to buy a piece of ground it is in most cases pegged off or held by some one and they have to arrange with those holding the ground and the price asked is generally exorbitant.

Now my contention is only a reasonable time should be allowed to enable capital to be raised and if the money cannot be obtained the ground should be forfeited and become again the property of the Crown. It will be contended that would do no good as some of the friends of the last party would immediately peg it off and apply for it as before but if due enquiry was made before the License was granted it would stop this being done, and prevent large areas being held by a few individuals.

A great deal is said about bringing in money to develop our mining industry but it appears to me that for some time past it has been the means of keeping capital out of the country and one of the reasons that English Capitalists will not have anything to do with mining in New Zealand is that during the last boom they were not only deceived by glowing reports but fleeced into the bargain.³¹⁹

CONCLUSION

Prospectors lamented that their discoveries made other people rich; Billy Nicholl, discoverer of the Martha lode at Waihi, was a notable example.³²⁰ In 1898, the *Observer* published a cartoon captioned 'The Troubles of a Prospector's Life. He endures the hardships and finds the gold, but he seldom gets any of the dollars'. The six illustrations commenced with 'Prospector Bill' finding 'a real nice, likely bit of stuff' and pegging out a claim. He shows a sample to 'Mr Speculator', who says, 'I'll see what we can do with our ground'. The latter is next portrayed in the office of 'Mr

³¹⁹ James Coutts to Minister of Mines ('Personal'), 13 March 1905, Inspector of Mines, Thames, Letterbook 1903-1906, pp. 359-360, YBAZ 1240/3, ANZ-A.

³²⁰ See paper on Billy Nicholl.

Boodler' [Swindler],³²¹ who says, 'You've cut into the lower level, Speculator, and it's more than payable. Now, I'll put in a claim for forfeiture for not complying with the Mining Act. You've seen to that all right, of course'. Then the 'Warden's Officer' tells Bill that his ground has been jumped. 'Good heavens! I left all that to Speculator. He's fooled me, and just as I've struck it rich'. The final two illustrations show Speculator, in top hat and smoking a cigar, reaping 'his reward for wit and shrewdness', whereas 'the old prospector, who uncovered the riches, goes back to hardships and starvation'.³²²

In 1894, the *Thames Advertiser* published 'the epitaph of the Australian digger':

Gold-diggers, like the inventors of the past, benefit the world more than themselves.... The founders of Victorian prosperity are mostly scattered about, in unknown graves, to which they descended poor and worn-out. The digger moves about and haunts the auriferous regions like a restless phantom, until the fire burns itself out, and he lies down to die. Meanwhile, the speculator, he of the cool head and the stony heart, he of the glossy coat and the artificial smile, thrives and dies an honoured citizen. His body lies in a mausoleum; the old bones of the digger lies, God knows where!³²³

As one journalist wrote, 'wherever the fever of speculation is raging a selection of the worst specimens of human nature is pretty sure to congregate'.³²⁴ A Hamilton newspaper condemned 'schemers' and 'mere speculators' creating a brief boom at Te Aroha and Ohinemuri in 1888 after foreign capital was introduced:

By and by, when the right moment arrives, there will be some startling announcements made of which lodes struck an astounding yield per ton, which will send shares up to fancy values, and certain people will reap the fine fortunes, but the fortunate ones will not be the hard-working miners, nor, perhaps, the local tradespeople.

³²¹ Jonathon Green, *The Cassell Dictionary of Slang* (London, 1998), p. 130.

³²² 'Blo', 'The Troubles of a Prospector's Life' (cartoon), *Observer*, 30 July 1898, p 17.

³²³ *Thames Advertiser*, 15 October 1894, p. 2.

³²⁴ *New Zealand Graphic*, 19 December 1896, p. 197.

It regretted that all the ground at Waiorongomai and Tui was pegged off mostly by people ‘of the non-mining class, share speculators and schemers in fact’, who would not mine or even test the ore but intended ‘to fill their pockets by a successful hocus-pocus that does not require hard manual labour or mechanical appliances’. These speculators ‘by just keeping within the letter of the law’ would gain possession of the ground ‘to the lasting injury of the true miner and retarding of the districts’.³²⁵

But prospectors could also play tricks on the investing public, as a paragraph in the same journal, in 1889, illustrated:

“The ways that are dark and tricks that are vain,” are often exemplified in connection with gold mining, and yet another case has been brought to light, for the truth of which my informant is prepared to vouch. Here is the story as he related it to me:- A few months ago a party of prospectors obtained some stones, containing very fair gold, from a certain locality near the Thames. These were duly shown around for the evident purpose of inducing any over-credulous individuals to buy shares at the ridiculously low prices offered – in fact, so low as could not fail to convince the most skeptical as to the exceedingly generous and philanthropic spirit actuating the vendors! But no one swallowed the bait. Then three months are allowed to elapse, when lo! the same gold bearing specimens are again exhibited as having [been] broken out, and as affording practical proof of the value of the “find.” Whether any shares have now been disposed of, has not transpired, but really the owners of the ground deserve success for their perseverance and honesty!³²⁶

The *Observer* published a mock advertisement for a ‘mining-boomster’: ‘Experience in working mines unnecessary, but must be well up in working newspapers’.³²⁷ The latter could be very direct: for example, referring to the Pioneer claim held at Waitekauri in 1875 by Peter Martin, who mined at Te Aroha during the rush there,³²⁸ the *Thames Advertiser* bluntly stated that as it was not a genuine discovery; Martin was ‘working the oracle’ and getting money off people falsely.³²⁹

³²⁵ Editorial, *Waikato Times*, 26 June 1888, p. 2.

³²⁶ *Observer*, 25 May 1889, p. 11.

³²⁷ *Observer*, 20 February 1897, p. 9.

³²⁸ See Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Register of Te Aroha Claims 1880-1888, folio 157, BBAV 11567/1a, ANZ-A; *Thames Advertiser*, 3 December 1880, p. 3, 16 December 1880, p. 3.

³²⁹ *Thames Advertiser*, 22 May 1875, p. 3.

In an address to the Auckland Catholic Literary Institute in 1873 on 'The Thames, Past, Present, and Future', Edmund Mahoney, involved with mining there in its early years,³³⁰ claimed that 'swindling in all its branches was carried on' there. 'Specimens were manufactured on the spot, and brought from other places; and almost any one could get unlimited credit by merely saying, that he had a couple of sleeping quarters, or working halves in some claims', naming some crack claim'.³³¹

People were so mad to have some interest in the Thames, that they did not care to trouble themselves about going to inspect the mines before buying. They were simply told that it was near "hunt's," or some other promising claim, and then they were satisfied.... To be possessed of a halfshare in a claim, without the unpleasantness of having to pay for the working of it, was considered a great chance.

People bought sleeping shares in the expectation of receiving dividends 'without having to pay more than the first cost'. He recalled that 'sometimes a man sold two or three "sleeping halves" in the same share and secured the money, and then "cleared out," leaving the ground to work itself'.³³² Some investors, unable to pay calls, sometimes paid others to take their scrip so as not to be liable for calls.³³³ As for the miners' morality, during the first Thames boom 'if any gold were obtained from the claims, the working managers and men had full scope to make away with it'.³³⁴

One Thames newspaper columnist, commenting on money being 'made and lost as usual in the fluctuations of mining speculation', wrote that mining ventures were 'like Chinese lotteries: the risk of losing is great, but if the fates are propitious there's a big return for precious little more than judicious manipulation'.³³⁵ Manipulating being done by both miners and investors.

³³⁰ See *Daily Southern Cross*, advertisement, 16 June 1868, p. 1, 22 July 1869, p. 4.

³³¹ Edmund Mahoney, Jr., 'The Thames, Past, Present, and Future', in Auckland Catholic Literary Institute, *Essays and Lectures written by the Members*, vol. 1 (Auckland, 1873[handwritten]), p. 82.

³³² Mahoney, pp. 83-84.

³³³ Mahoney, p. 88.

³³⁴ Mahoney, p. 89.

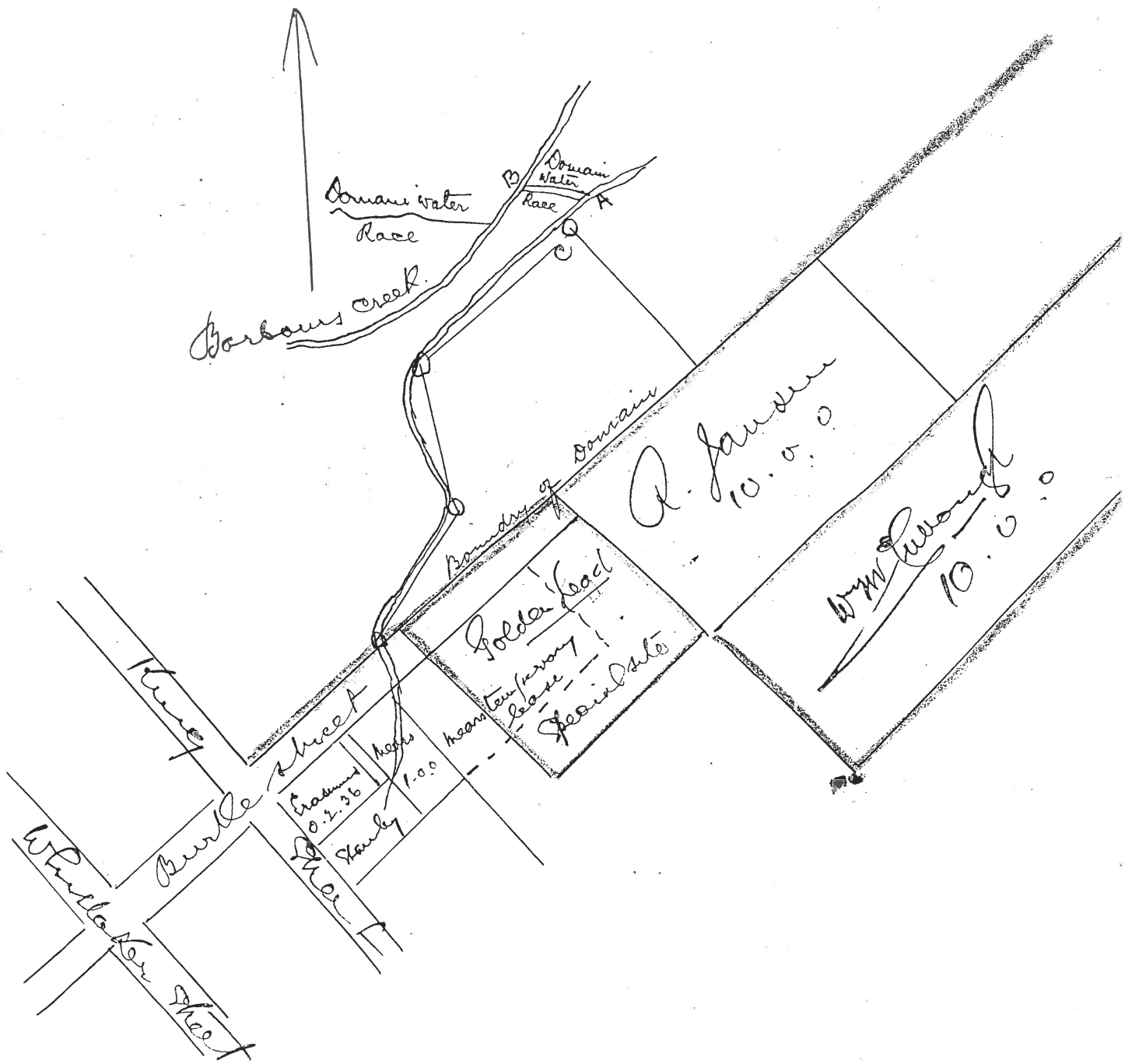
³³⁵ 'What Everybody Says', *Thames Star*, 2 May 1874, p. 2.

Appendix

Figure 1: Plan of Success (owner: Richard Thomas Jansen) and Success Extended (owner: William McCullough), Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1906, 11/1906, BBAV 11289, 18a, ANZ-A [Archives New Zealand/Te Rua Mahara o te Kawanatanga, Auckland Regional Office]; used with permission.

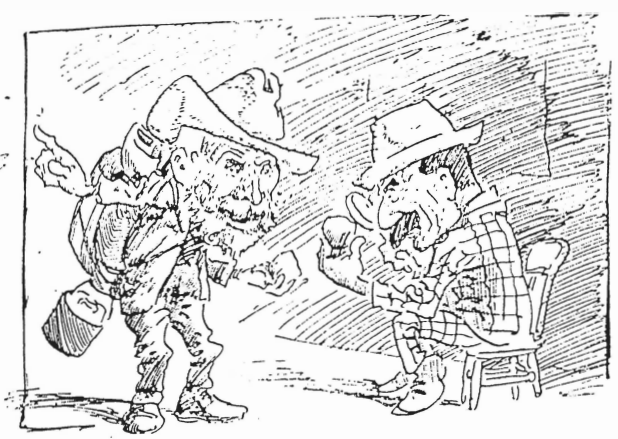
Figure 2: 'Blo' [William Blomfield], 'The troubles of a Prospector's Life. He endures the hardships and finds the gold, but he seldom gets any of the dollars', *Observer*, 30 July 1898, p. 17.

Figure 1: Plan of Success (owner: Richard Thomas Jansen) and Success Extended (owner: William McCullough), Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1906, 11/1906, BBAV 11289, 18a, ANZ-A [Archives New Zealand/Te Rua Mahara o te Kawanatanga, Auckland Regional Office]; used with permission.





PROSPECTOR BILL : Ah ! there's a real nice, likely bit of stuff, and there's plenty of 'it' here. I guess I'll 'peg out a claim.



MR SPECULATOR : Yes, Bill, that's a real nice bit of stuff you've pegged out and applied for all right. I'll see what we can do with our ground.



MR BOODLER : You've cut into the lower level, Speculator, and it's more than payable. Now, I'll put in a claim for forfeiture for not complying with the Mining Act. You've seen to that all right, of course.



WARDEN'S OFFICER : Here, Bill, you've got to quit this ground. It's jumped for not complying with the Act. Prospector Bill, God heavens ! I let that all to Speculator. He's rich.



Mr Speculator earns his reward for wit and shrewdness.



While the old prospector, who uncovered the riches, goes back to hard- ships and starvation.

THE TROUBLES OF A PROSPECTOR'S

HE ENDURES THEM ALL, BUT HE FINDS THE GOLD, BUT HE SELDOM GETS ANY OF THE DOLLARS.

Figure 2: 'Blo' [William Blomfield], 'The troubles of a Prospector's Life. He endures the hardships and finds the gold, but he seldom gets any of the dollars', Observer, 30 July 1898, p. 17.