THE DOUBLE-TRACKED TRAMWAY FROM NORTH'S SIDING TO THE ENGINE BANK.

Taking the Railway Guide of New South Wales (1886 edition) as our authority it can be mentioned that John Britty North appears to have been responsible for the construction of a double-tracked surface skip-way, operated by a circulating wire cable, leading from the loading staith at North's Siding to the Engine Bank. This line followed a straight southerly course for a distance of one and a quarter miles and at North's Siding entered the precincts of the loading staith where presumably, a tippler was installed for the unloading of skips arriving on the outbye line. After this function had been completed the small vehicles would be attached to the circulating cable for their return to the adits via the in-bye line. The staith straddled all three standard guage tracks, thus enabling the minerals to be readily dumped into the Departmental wagons placed beneath for their reception.

The double-tracked skip-way was steeply down-graded from the staith in order to pass beneath the outer single-tracked shunting neck of the standard-guage sidings. Beyond this under-bridge, of low height, the skip-way crossed a low trestle bridge which spanned the trickling head-waters of Katoomba Falls Creek. The still down-graded route then surfaced over a hillock where earth-works were kept to a minimum, to reach a deeper creek declivity which needed the erection of a suspension bridge to maintain an even track descent. Details as to the design of this bridge are not to hand but it is assumed that the support towers would be of timber construction, with wood decking for the tracks, and the tensioning and down dropping cables fashioned from the standard wire ropes used in mining practice for haulage purposes.

At the southern end of the double-tracked skip-way it is conjectured that the out-bye and in-bye lines each made an end-on junction with the cable-haulage lines ascending from the mine levels of the Jamieson Valley. Details of the winding engine arrangement at the Engine Bank are not available but it is possible that a separate steam engine attended to the movement of the circulating cable leading outwards to, and inwards from, the staith at North's Siding. The weight of the circulating cable has been given at five tons, to which must be added the frictional drag and also the resistance afforded by the travelling skips. In accordance with standard practice it may be assumed that a weighted cable tensioning device was installed at or near the upper staith structure.

Although the Railway Guide states that the above line was in operation at 1886, this mention does not tally with a reference, published in "THE KEROSENE SHALE DEPOSITS OF NEW SOUTH WALES", that the tramway was established by the Australian Kerosene Oil and Mineral Company, a

Bucket from the Katoomba aerial cableway abandoned in the valley. *J. Luxton.*

Remains of suspension bracket for buckets on Katoomba aerial cableway. *J. Luxton.*