

*Beach Workings.*—The only feature of mining progress that I am able to specify upon the coast is the taking up of large numbers of claims upon the sea beach. It has long been known that the black sand on the sea beach would pay pretty good wages if water was at hand to wash it; but it was thought, I suppose, that it was not rich enough to pay for bringing in water from a distance. Further experience, however, appears to have produced the belief that the sand is worth the labor and expense of bring water to it, and a large number of claims have been taken up on the beach between Westport and Charleston. Several races are also in course of construction for the purpose of bringing water to the beach. It is supposed that these claims will pay from twenty to thirty shillings a day. In every instance double areas of ground have been given on the beach.

*Legal Doubts.*—In relation to these claims some doubts have been expressed how far the beach below high water mark comes within the jurisdiction of Wardens of gold fields, and how far mining claims can legally be held there at all. Without going minutely into this question of law, I may observe that, according to Blackstone, "Between the high water mark and the low water mark, where the sea ebbs and flows, the common law and the Admiralty have *divisum imperium*, an alternate jurisdiction; one upon the water when it is full sea, the other upon the land when it is an ebb." It would seem to follow from this that the sea beach at low water comes under the denomination of Crown Lands, and forms a part of the gold fields.

I have nothing more to add as to the general condition of this district, which, so far as relates to what is not strictly mining, is now well known to the Superintendent and the Government from their own personal observation. It is satisfactory also to know that the Premier of the colony has thought the West Coast gold fields worthy of a visit and a minute and careful inspection, which has enabled him adequately to appreciate the importance of the district.

*Roads.*—I shall conclude this part of my remarks by observing that the work of the amalgamated district of Westport, Charleston, and Brighton, would be very much facilitated by the completion of the unfinished road from Westport to Charleston *via* Addison's Flat; also, that the workings near Brighton would be much assisted, the chances of new ground being opened much increased, and the journey to Greymouth much facilitated by opening the coast track from Brighton to the Razorback.

*Pig and Cattle Nuisance.*—I beg to urge upon the Government the expediency of passing some short Ordinance during the sitting of the Provincial Council for the suppression of the nuisance, now become almost intolerable, caused by the number of pigs, goats, horses, &c., always wandering about the towns of Westport and Charleston. A brief addition to the Constabulary Ordinance, empowering the police to impound and take summary proceedings, might answer the purpose. Some provision should also be made against the practice of driving infuriated oxen through the streets, from which serious accidents have happened more than once.

*Licensing Act.*—It has been sometimes thought expedient that the Wardens of gold fields should, in their yearly reports, notice the Gold Fields Licensing Act, and make suggestions for its improvement. This may be useful where the suggestions relate to details in the working of the Act. I have, however, none to make, not because I believe the Act to be perfect, for I agree with the common opinion which regards it as very inefficient, but because I do not believe that it will ever be made efficient by alterations of detail. Suggestions in plenty are constantly being made from different quarters, which the legislature can of course consider, but there are few of these in which I can join, because they mostly involve a view of the subject in which I by no means acquiesce. But the great objection which appears to me to lie against the Licensing Act is that whilst it fails to suppress drinking and immorality, it produces a directly demoralising effect by containing enactments and prohibitions which constitute new offences, and which are not enforced once for a hundred times that they are notoriously violated. And thus the uneducated masses come to think that all laws may be treated with contempt provided detection and punishment do not follow. As a Magistrate, I am bound to say that the Licensing Act is simply a means of revenue, obtained for the most part at the cost of impairing in the public mind the sense of respect for law.

Approximate number of miners in district, 1,100.

*Westport.*—Miners rights issued for twelve months ending 31st March, 1872, 566; business licenses, (value £986), 286; summonses, 42; applications, 521; mining lesses applied for, 31; agricultural, 5.

Resident Magistrate's Court.—Criminal cases heard, 172; civil, 322.

Revenue.—From all sources received at the Warden's Office, Westport, £4,376 14s. 4d.; preceding twelve months, £5,596 16s. 1d.; amount of revenue (exclusive of the above) transmitted from Reefton and Inangahua to the receiver at Westport for the twelve months ending 31st March, 1872, £3,636 16s.

*Charleston and Brighton.*—Miner's rights issued for the twelve months ending 31st March, 1872, 792; business licenses, 291; summonses, 75; applications, 920.

Resident Magistrate's Court.—criminal cases, Charleston, 84; Brighton, 21; civil cases, Charleston, 245; Brighton, 35.

Revenue.—From all sources, £5,286 12s. 9d.; revenue for the preceding year, £5,406 2s. 6d.

*Gold Export.*—The total quantity of gold exported for the six months ending 31st March, amounted to 53,935ozs. 6dwts. 7grs.; representing a total value of £218,867 19s. 11d.; and the duty thereon amounted to £6,741 18s. 10d.

I have, &c.,

JOSEPH GILES,

R.M. and Warden.

To the Provincial Secretary, Nelson.