

sent down, as against 32,928 oz. for the year ending March 31st, 1872, being an increase of 4,473 oz. Value of year's produce (estimated at £3 15s. per ounce), £140,254.

I have, &c.,

VINCENT PYKE, Warden.

NOTE.—The usual returns are appended.—V. P.

The Under Secretary for Gold Fields, Wellington.

No. 15.

Mr. Warden BORTON to the UNDER SECRETARY for GOLD FIELDS.

SIR,—

Roxburgh, 10th April, 1873.

I have the honor to report that during the twelve months ended the 31st of March last, the district as a whole has been prosperous; miners have generally obtained remunerative returns for their capital and labour, and the agricultural portion of the population are continually receiving fresh accessions to their ranks. As regards the former class, the same want is felt here as is experienced, I believe, in nearly every other part of the Otago Gold Fields—namely, an increased supply of water. Were this great desideratum supplied, it would be hard to fix a limit to the increase that would take place, both in the population and prosperity of the district. I am glad to be able to state that a quartz lode discovered some time ago at the Fourteen Mile Bush is in a fair way of being thoroughly tested. A company has, I believe, been formed, and a contract let for driving along the supposed line of reef, so as to ascertain its permanency and the richness of the stone. Should these preliminary operations result satisfactorily, quartz mining will become one of the recognized and established industries in this part of the gold field.

The population, as you will notice in the statistical return forwarded herewith, is increasing. Europeans of all classes and ages I estimate at 1,100, and Chinese (chiefly miners) at 250.

The revenue is also on the increase, being something like £1,200 this year as compared with £800 for the previous twelve months. These sums, however, do not represent the whole revenue derived from the district, but only so much as passes through the books of the Receiver of Gold Revenue and Clerk to the Bench. With the spirit licenses, dog taxes, coal leases, &c., added to the above amount, the revenue would probably reach some £1,600 or £1,700 a year.

The Secretary for Gold Fields, Wellington.

I have, &c.,

J. B. BORTON, Warden.

No. 16.

Mr. Warden ROBINSON to the UNDER SECRETARY for GOLD FIELDS.

SIR,—

Warden's Office, Naseby, 1st April, 1873.

In accordance with instructions, I have the honor to report upon the district under my charge as Warden for the last year as follows:—

1. The year has, on the whole, not been a favourable one for mining. It has been unusually dry in all seasons, and the consequence has been a remarkable scarcity of water for sluicing purposes. This has seriously cramped the energies of the miners, sluicing being the only method of alluvial mining practised here.

2. By far the most important matter, as affecting mining in this district during the year, has been the initiation of the public works at Naseby. These works consist of a large water race from the upper branches of the Manuherikia River to Naseby, and of a sludge or main tail-race, extending from Naseby for ten miles down the Hogburn Gully. This latter work has been let to one contracting party for £18,000, and they have set to work with an energy which augurs well for the speedy completion of their contract. The head-race will be about sixty miles in length; of this, ten miles have been contracted for, and the works are now in progress. It is expected that other lengths will soon be let out. The whole are being executed according to the plans and under the supervision of Mr. D. L. Simpson, the Provincial Engineer of Otago. The original scheme contemplated the bringing in of a flushing water race from the Little Kyeburn; but after a careful survey, Mr. Simpson decided that it would be best to bring in the large supply from the Manuherikia at once, and the Little Kyeburn flushing water race has therefore not been gone on with.

3. Great expectations have been based on these undertakings, but some time must elapse before the practical benefit can be reaped from them. The sludge channel cannot be completed much under twelve months, and it seems likely that the construction of the great water race will take at the least two years. When completed, it will be a splendid work; and there is every reason to believe that the water race and sludge channel in conjunction will be the means of affording employment for a series of years to a considerable number of miners, and will enable much auriferous land to be worked, which, without them, would hardly have been got at.

4. Since the levels for the main sludge channel have been known, it has been alleged by some miners, that to command all the ground it will be necessary that it should be made deeper at the Naseby end. The matter has been brought under the attention of the Provincial authorities and the Engineer, and is now under consideration. It is argued by the advocates of the deeper level that it would be a pity to bring up the channel at a certain depth, and then find that it would be advisable to make it deeper, whereas, by a slight modification of the gradient, the required depth could be obtained in the first instance without any very great additional outlay. I refrain from myself passing an opinion on this point, as it is eminently one for professional skill to determine, and will no doubt receive the consideration it deserves.