

5. The Mount Ida District has never yet been very famous or fortunate in the matter of quartz reefing. For a while there was some excitement about the reefs at Roughridge and at Macrae's, but one after another the claims were abandoned, and the companies wound up. Lately, however, there has been a sort of revival of the quartz mining interest, in respect of a number of reefs discovered in the Dunback Ranges, Stag Valley. The boundaries of the gold field have been extended to take in the scene of these new discoveries, and much enterprise has been shown by claimholders. Already there are three batteries of stamps erected, and a large amount of work done; not only in the way of getting out quartz, but in the formation of reservoirs and the cutting of roads. That there exists quite a network of reefs is evident. It is also a fact that, although not rich, the stone has yielded payable returns for such crushings as have been obtained. It remains now to be seen whether these reefs will pay for continuous working. It is only fair to add that the companies that have already got fairly to work seem very sanguine of success. The reefs at Roughridge, after a long interval of neglect, are about to get another trial, at the hands of a company bearing the well-omened name of "The Energetic." I am given to understand that this company has obtained prospects justifying the regular opening out of a mine and the erection of suitable crushing machinery, and that the necessary arrangements are now in a forward state.

6. The Maerewhenua division of the district has made some advances during the year, but its development has been by no means rapid. The work, for the most part, is still only of a preparatory character. Further portions of races have been constructed; and one race—that known as "The Mosquito"—has been finished, its completion having been made the occasion of some festivity; but still it must be said that the thorough opening up of the Maerewhenua diggings is a thing of the future. The holders of some of the water rights are showing great determination in carrying out works that have proved to be far more difficult and costly than was expected when they were begun. They are full of hope. One party have been at work for the past two years, bringing in a large race from the Kakanui River. They have made nine miles of the race, and have six or seven more to do. This party propose to avail themselves of the assistance of the Government to finish the work. Their race, when completed, will command a fine extent of good ground for sluicing.

7. With reference to the water of the Kakanui River, an important question has arisen during the year. Besides the party already referred to, there have been two other companies that have applied for and obtained grants of water from the Kakanui. Not content with the grants they held, they made application for additional supplies, more in fact than the stream could possibly have yielded, and this seems to have roused the fears of the owners and occupiers of property down the river, near its mouth. A strong objection was put in on behalf of the owners and occupiers of a flour mill, a fellmongery, and a meat-preserving establishment, near the mouth of the Kakanui, and, after hearing the arguments adduced, I found it necessary to refuse the applications for additional supplies of water. This refusal was considered so significant that one of the companies decided to wind-up its affairs, not deeming it safe, in the face of such opposition as might be expected from the riparian proprietors down stream, to commence their race at all. The other party have their rights under protection, and are, for the present, watching the course of events; not liking to commit themselves to a large expenditure until they can feel sure of being able to carry their enterprise to its completion without clashing with other and possibly more powerful interests.

8. The several mining centres of Hamilton, Hyde, and Serpentine have not during the past year presented any matters in connection with mining worth recording. Their mining population has remained about the same, and if anything has suffered diminution, rather than increase. Macrae's, on the other hand, has shown signs of improvement, which, although not very noticeable, are yet satisfactory.

9. No review of the past year would be complete which should omit to notice the improvements in the town of Naseby. The year that has gone by has been especially momentous for Naseby, as it has seen the erection of the town into a municipality, and the starting of the public works, which, it is believed, will place its prosperity on a really sound foundation. Without going into details, I will simply say that the place is evidently growing. New buildings are continually going up. The Presbyterian body have got up the walls of a commodious and substantial church, and the Church of England has funds collected towards the same object. Everything denotes confidence in the permanence of Naseby as a mining centre.

10. In my last report I had to include Hill's Creek and St. Bathans, of which I had charge during the temporary translation of Mr. Warden Carew to Clyde, to do duty for Mr. Warden Simpson, absent on leave; but as Mr. Carew has since resumed charge of his own district, I must leave him now to report upon those localities. This change will also make a noticeable difference in the tabular returns.

11. In conclusion, I have to express my satisfaction that, notwithstanding a bad year for mining, the district has continued to hold its own so well; and my earnest hope is, that a more favourable season for water may enable me in my next report to present a more cheerful statement of affairs.

I have, &c.,

The Under Secretary for Gold Fields, Wellington.

H. W. ROBINSON, Warden.

No. 17.

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

SIR,—

Warden's Office, Black's, Otago, 24th April, 1873.

I have the honor to forward herewith statistical returns for the gold field under my charge, for the year ending the 31st March, and beg to report as follows:—

A scarcity of water has prevailed to an unprecedented extent for at least six months out of the twelve, which in this district, where mining, with barely an exception, is carried on by means of ground sluicing, has been exceedingly detrimental to mining interests. There are several new races in course