

up for the purposes of speculation merely, but that state of things has now gone by. I think, if it were left to persons desiring ground to make complaints or not as to the condition of leases being complied with, and that then the Warden should hold a preliminary inquiry, and report to His Honor with the evidence taken as to whether there was any *locus penitentiæ*, that such an inquiry would be far more effective than the casual visit of an Inspector to a lease, dependent entirely for his information from the parties themselves. What will be wanted as the works progress will no doubt be an Inspector of Mines, to see to the safety of the workings, and this would require a practical engineer.

6. *Progress of the Place*.—The past year has seen the erection of some 200 wooden buildings at Reefton and Black's Point. An Odd Fellows' Hall, Public Hall, Telegraph Office, Court House, steam saw mills, and construction of thirty miles of excellent dray road; the formation of streets; and, last, though not least, the completion by the private enterprise of Mr. Dalton of an excellent wire bridge across the Inangahua, which is at once a convenience to the public and an ornament to the place.

The Lyell, from being an isolated place with three or four tumbledown-looking buildings perched on the top of a cliff, now begins to assume the pretensions of a township—boasting its local paper, and a fortnightly Court. To insure the permanent prosperity of a district like this, *Festina lente* must be the motto. I have no doubt that next year the district will continue to show sure but slow progression.

The Under Secretary for Gold Fields, Wellington.

I have, &c.,

CHARLES BROAD, Warden.

No. 7.

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

SIR,—

Warden's Office, Ahaura, Grey District, 12th May, 1873.

I have the honor herewith to forward a copy of a report recently furnished by me to the Provincial Government, Nelson, which contains a full account of the progress and condition of the district since the date of my last report to you.

I avail myself of the opportunity now given me of again bringing under the notice of the Government the urgent necessity of at once proceeding with the formation of one or more large water races in this district, without which this portion of the gold fields can never be properly worked, or afford employment to anything like the population it is capable of supporting. From the want of some proper water supply in this district, I am quite satisfied that, owing to the dry season we have experienced during the last few months, the loss to the country caused by so many miners being idle for weeks at a time may be estimated at a very large sum.

Attached will be found the returns called for by your circular of the 12th February, 1873.

I have, &c.,

Under Secretary for Gold Fields, Wellington.

CALEB WHITEFOORD, Warden.

Mr. Warden WHITEFOORD to the PROVINCIAL SECRETARY, Nelson.

SIR,—

Grey District, Warden's Office, Ahaura, 19th April, 1873.

I do myself the honor to submit, for the information of the Government and Provincial Council, the following report upon the condition and prospects of that portion of the Nelson South-West Gold Fields which has been under my charge as Warden for the last twelve months.

In my last yearly report I had to deplore the losses this district had sustained from the ravages of a severe flood, which had been most disastrous in its effects. I have now, I regret to say, to report that the whole district has been suffering from a prolonged drought, which has had a very depressing influence upon the whole community. In many places, the miners have been altogether idle for weeks at a time, utterly unable to do anything for want of water. Parties engaged in sluicing have been those chiefly affected, but almost all have lost considerably by being unable to obtain the necessary amount of water to work their claims regularly. The inhabitants about Nelson Creek, No Town, and Noble's have been the principal sufferers. Owing to this cause, mining and business matters have been less brisk and lively for the last few months than they would otherwise have been; but even under these unfavourable circumstances, the population has been fairly maintained, and many who left about this time last year have returned and set to work again, either in the old claims or in different parts of the district. Fresh ground has also been opened up at Orwell Creek and other places with every appearance of success.

A good deal of prospecting for reefs about the dividing range between the Inangahua and Grey Valleys has been going on for some time past, and at Big River. Anderson and party have done a great deal of work in endeavouring to discover a payable reef. They have not yet succeeded in doing so, and have for the present ceased working; but they intend to prosecute their search when they have reorganized their party.

The past season, while unfavourable to the miners, has however been a very fair one for the farmers at Totara Flat and elsewhere; and although the crops have been light in places in consequence of the dry weather, the produce has all been gathered in in first-rate order, and a larger quantity of grain, potatoes, &c., have been grown in the district than in any preceding year.

For convenience of comparison, I shall report upon the different mining localities in the same order I have adopted in my former yearly reports.

North Beach Workings and Razorback.—I do not think there are so many men regularly at work on the beach from Cobden northwards, as when I made my last annual report, but the condition and prospects of those engaged in this description of mining remain pretty much the same as heretofore. Besides extended areas and ordinary claims, there are five gold mining leases, employing forty men and two steam engines, still being worked, the holders of which appear satisfied with their prospects. The ground taken up at the Razorback on a high level, and for which I granted a prospecting claim some