

during the year. It will be seen, that in New Zealand, as in Australia, the quartz mines yield a larger return of gold per miner employed, than the alluvial; but it must be taken into consideration that the cost of machinery in quartz mining is much greater than in the case of alluvial workings. On the Thames I find that, in the year ending 14th March, by the Warden's returns, 89,326 tons of quartz produced 114,180 oz., affording an average of 1 oz. 5 dwts. 13½ grs. to the ton; which, from an average obtained from twenty-five companies on the gold field, is worth £2 14s. 6½d. per oz., yielding per miner per annum, £174 16s. In Coromandel, during the year ending March, 1873, 8,732 tons of quartz produced 16,307 oz., of the value of £46,500, being equal to a yield of 1 oz. 17 dwts. 7¼ grs. per ton, and to £116 5s. per head per annum. In the Province of Nelson, 18,568 tons of quartz yielded 20,542 oz. of gold, value £77,508 12s. 1d., giving an average of 1 oz. 2 dwts. 3 grs. to the ton. The Warden's estimate of the number of quartz miners in this district is 635, thus showing an amount per head per annum of £122 1s. 2d. In the Dunstan district, in Otago, 120 quartz miners were employed, producing 12,733 oz. of gold, of the value of £47,005 18s. 10d., or £391 14s. 3½d. per head per annum. The richness of the Cromwell Company's reef will account for the large returns in this district.

Some singular facts have been elicited from the Wardens' returns as to the earnings of alluvial miners. In the Ahaura district, the average is £70 6s. 8½d. per annum; in Okarita, £76 12s. 6½d.; in Greymouth, £81 11s. 8d.; in Ross, £90 14s.; whilst in a short distance of four miles, between the Waimea and the Kanieri, the difference given is between £28 10s. 10½d. in the former, and £148 4s. in the latter. In Otago, the results in different districts are also remarkable. In the Tuapeka district, the average is £102 1s. per annum; in Mount Ida, £47 3s. 1d.; at Switzer's, £52 4s. 10d.; whilst in other districts there was a difficulty in arriving at an estimate.

Although the effect of the public works policy has been, as the Wardens in their reports affirm, to draw a considerable portion of the mining population to other pursuits, it is satisfactory to observe that the persons so removed from the gold fields are profitably employed in other branches of industry. Mr. Warden Keddell, writing from Coromandel, remarks:—"The demand for labour, and the high wages, on public and other works in the South Island, have had the effect of inducing some of our best men to leave, and the labour especially of skilled miners has been in demand."

Mr. Warden Fraser says,—“The abundance of work throughout the colony has a tendency to take away men who might otherwise devote themselves to prospecting.”

Mr. Warden Carew, when remarking the reduction of 575 miners in his district, considers it “in no respect owing to any failure of auriferous resources, but is to be attributed to the general prosperity of the province, and the prosecution of large public works having created an active demand for labour, at a price exceeding the average earnings by gold mining.”

The reports of other Wardens contain analogous statements.

WATER RACES.

There were in the colony, on the 31st March, 1874, 4,510 water races, of a length of 5,911 miles, carrying 9,059 sluice-heads of water, constructed at an estimated cost of £854,465.

It will be observed in the reports that many of the Wardens complain of the insufficient water supply in their districts. The utilization of waste water is a question of paramount importance; the necessary works, however, would be costly, and out of the power of private associations of miners.

MACHINERY.

The returns of the machinery employed in alluvial and quartz mining, for the year ending 31st March, 1874, will be found in Tables Nos. 16 and 17.

MINING LEASES, HOLDINGS, AND MINING COMPANIES.

It will be seen that, although the information as to leases and holdings is complete, what I was able to obtain with regard to the mining companies in the colony is of an imperfect character. Mr. Warden Fraser says he possesses no information on this subject. The registration of mining companies in his office (the Thames) ceased on 31st December, 1872, by the operation of “The Mining Companies Act, 1872,” which requires such registration to be effected at the office of the Registrar of the Supreme Court, Auckland.

AGRICULTURAL LEASES.

The area of ground held under agricultural leases has been nearly doubled during the year ending March, 1874; the majority of these are in Otago. 5,000 acres have been taken up under the same system, on the Inangahua and the Buller, during the last two years.