

is a work of more than ordinary difficulty, has no doubt induced the partial cessation of looking for new ground.

I think I may say that a reaction is commencing from the depression which has existed on this field since the cessation of the large yields from the Caledonian. The Bright Smile, Queen of Beauty, and City of London, on the Waio Karaka, have produced large quantities of gold from good-sized reefs, which are improving as they are sunk upon, causing reasonable expectation that the Shortland flat will be found to contain payable reefs.

Grahamstown, 1st April, 1874.

W. FRASER,
Warden.

MARLBOROUGH.

No. 3.

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

Report on the Gold Fields in the Province of Marlborough, for the Year ended 31st March, 1874.

Pelorus.—I regret to say nothing of an encouraging nature has transpired here during the past year. The population is gradually decreasing, and I much fear the district will be abandoned altogether unless some steps are taken to procure a water supply to work the terraces, or quartz reefs are discovered. Quite recently attention has been turned to reefing, and a party is at present prospecting specially for reefs. Nothing hitherto has been found.

Wairau.—This field is at the present time quite deserted.

Ravenscliff.—Up to the close of the year nothing but the preliminary work necessary to the opening the reefs has been done. This work has taken a much longer time than was anticipated. A few samples of stone have been crushed, yielding a moderately satisfactory result. The workings are at present confined principally to two claims, the Turner Gold Mining Company and Port Gore Company. Both these will probably use the same machinery, and both are ready to get out quartz. The crushing for April will be a fair criterion of what may be expected from the reef.

Queen Charlotte Sound.—Nothing has been done here. One lease has been taken out, and the lessees are sanguine. I have information of the discovery of two other reefs, but they are untried. The district appears to be rich in minerals. Antimony in large quantities has been found, of a very good quality. Plumbago also exists, but the quality of that at present known is not very good, though I believe only the surface has been tried.

I regret very much the unsatisfactory nature of the earlier portion of my report, and that I am unable to give you more definite information as to the value of the two last-named gold fields, but their future very much depends on the results obtained from the Turner Company claim. Should that prove to be satisfactory, new life will be given to mining matters in this locality, and probably a bright future may open for the district. At present, all that can be said on that head is merely conjectural.

I have, &c.,

W. WHITEHORN,
Warden.

The Under Secretary for Gold Fields, Wellington.

NELSON.

No. 4.

Mr. Warden GUINNESS to the UNDER SECRETARY for GOLD FIELDS:

SIR,—

Warden's Office, Collingwood, 7th May, 1874.

In reply to your telegram of 4th instant, I have the honor to state that in consequence of the death of Dr. Turnell, the late warden of this district, and of my having so lately (since the 5th March) taken charge of the office, I cannot possibly furnish a report that would be at all reliable as to many, or rather any, of the queries contained in your circular of 7th January, 1874; nor can I possibly supply the returns asked for, in consequence of there not having been any regular system of recording the several transactions which took place. I am preparing a record, or registration book, which will enable me to furnish accurate information on all such matters in future.

I may state that since I have had charge of this district I have travelled but little, being compelled to attend to the duties of so many different offices; but I have seen the West Wanganui gold field, which was proclaimed last October, and have to report that three reefs are discovered, which, in my opinion, are likely to become of very great importance. They show in a well-defined manner, and a trial crushing of one ton from the prospectors' claim yielded 41½ ounces of retorted gold. This ton of stone was selected from about 30 to 40 tons which had been taken from the reef. I saw the reef, and the gold in it plainly visible. As reefs of a similar character have since been traced nearly nine miles south of the prospectors, there appears to be good grounds for expecting a large reefing district to be opened in this locality. A small five-stamp battery is in course of erection, and its working will be the means of showing how far the trial crushing will be borne out. I have urged the Provincial Government to make a pack-track of about nine miles, from the south end of West Wanganui Inlet, so that miners could obtain their provisions cheaper than at present. Flour at the reefs now costs £4 per cwt., and all other things are proportionally dear. Meat is considered comparatively cheap at 1s. per pound, but an influx of population would cause an immediate rise in price. There are about sixty miners employed in this part of the district, and all are doing well.

I venture to point out a serious difficulty which must arise in case a rush sets in to the reefs—it is the impossibility of issuing any kind of license for selling alcoholic liquors, the present law prevent-