

1st. The continuation of the main road from Nelson through Matakītaki and Lyell to Christy's, to connect with Reefton Road on the one side and Westport Road on the other.

2nd. The connection of the Larry's Creek and Boatman's Creek reefs with the main road by a dray road.

3rd. The formation of a pack track from Black's Point to Rainy Creek.

4th. The formation of a pack track to New Creek, near the Lyell.

5th. To blaze a track from the Lyell to the head of Mokihinui.

The approaches to the punt across the Buller, at the Lyell, require making at once. It is with the greatest difficulty horses or cattle are crossed at present, and, in fact, it is dangerous.

NEW DISCOVERIES.

Beyond the developing the present reefs, very little has been done in the way of new discovery during the past year. Probably the only actual new find is the discovery of a new auriferous quartz leader at the New Creek, Lyell, about five miles up from its junction with the Buller River, and about three miles north-east of the Alpine line of reef. A prospecting area was granted to McBride and party on the 2nd February last, since which five applications for gold mining leases in that locality have been made.

The excellent yields from the Fiery Cross and Just-in-Time claims at Boatman's have also served to again draw attention to that locality, and various claims are now in full work both there, at Italian Gully, and Larry's Creek, which probably would have otherwise been left untouched for a very considerable time.

The alluvial workings at Soldier's Creek can hardly be called new discoveries, but from the systematic method now adopted for working, and the extensive ground-sluicing operations in progress, together with the excellent yield from the claims, it is but fair to say that for the first time for many years have these claims been worked to proper advantage.

In previous reports I have alluded to the discovery of antimony, coal, iron, lime, clay, lignite, &c. To these I may now add marble, concerning which Mr. Theodore Ranft furnishes me with the annexed report:—

"The marble of this district is of three different kinds. The best quality is principally of a coral formation, of a grey-blue with white veins, and capable of a high polish. Its extent I have proved over a distance of three-quarters of a mile, where it is overlaid by a newer formation. The stratum is divided into a number of beds, varying from six inches to as many feet, and the total thickness is over 30 feet. It is situated between Lankey's and Garvey's Creeks. The next in quality is situated about a mile and a half further north, and is of vaster extent. It is of a brown-blue ground, with white bands intervening. The organic formation differs from the former in its having less coral, and molluscs are more prominent. The third quality is situated on the Waitahu, is of a deep black, beautifully interwoven with white veins. In structure it is the most massive, blocks of 50 cubic feet being easily obtainable without the slightest joint. It is not so crystalline as the first-named, but is capable of a good polish. In organic structure it differs from the second quality by being principally of mollusc origin, and enclosing but little coral in proportion to the first quality. All three marbles would be invaluable for ornamental and architectural purposes if there existed a reasonable means of transport to the seaboard. The natural access is good, and an outlay of £100 would enable wagons to load on the site. In the same formation there is a large deposit of calcspar and selenite, easily convertible into lime and cement."

FUTURE PROSPECTS.

We end the present financial year and commence the next with all the elements of prosperity to assist us. Already negotiations have been entered into for the erection of 100 additional heads of stampers in various parts of the district. The Energetic Company are erecting increased machinery, to be worked by steam power, which the splendid coal adjoining their claim will enable them to do. A public Crushing Company has entered into arrangements with several claims to erect machinery about two miles beyond Black's Point, Inangahua, and crush for them at a low rate, which will still further tend to the development of the district. At the Lyell, arrangements are being made for increased machinery, whilst machinery is in course of erection at Larry's Creek, to crush for that remarkably good-looking claim known as No. 2 South Larry's. The formation of main dray roads will tend largely to open up country of which little is known at present, and afford considerable facilities to others who are living in places that are known to obtain provisions, or, in case of agricultural leaseholders, to take their produce to a market. Arrangements have also been made for the erection of machinery at Rainy Creek, a distance of some eight miles beyond Reefton, up the Inangahua River, where there exists a quartz reef, with excellent coal in the immediate proximity. A large seam of antimony is also in existence in the vicinity.

There has been no retrogression, and the still appropriate motto for the district is *Festina lente*.

The Under Secretary for Gold Fields, Wellington.

I have, &c.,

CHARLES BROAD,
Warden.

No. 7.

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

SIR,—

Grey District, Warden's Office, Ahaura, 22nd May, 1874.

I have the honor to forward herewith general report upon the state and prospects of this district, together with the returns called for in your circular of the 10th January last.

The report is a copy of one (with a few omissions of matters relating to Road Boards, &c.) I recently furnished to the Provincial Government, Nelson.

I have, &c.,

CALEB WHITEFOORD,
Warden.

The Under Secretary for Gold Fields, Wellington.