

REPORT.

THE population of this district on the 1st March, 1874 (as given by the Census Enumerators), amounts to 3,248, and is distributed as follows:—

Sub-district of Cobden	...	...	...	...	619
" No Town	...	...	...	...	908
Ahaura (township only)	...	...	...	...	200
Sub-district of Granville, Nobles, &c.	...	...	...	...	702
" Ahaura and Nelson Creek	...	...	...	...	453
Other Creeks and Gullies, Little Grey, &c....	...	...	...	...	366
Total	...	...	...	...	3,248

The population as given by me in my last annual report was 3,365; and as no material alteration has taken place in the numbers of miners employed in the district since I furnished that estimate, it will be seen I was very nearly correct in the return I then gave. The average earnings of the miners (so far as can be ascertained from storekeepers and others) have been fairly maintained, and I see no reason to anticipate any falling off in this respect, or with regard to the population, during the ensuing year. The district has lately been visited by a severe flood, which has inflicted much damage upon the miners and residents of the various localities. The residents at Cobden have suffered severely, and great inconvenience and loss have occurred at Half Ounce, the track to which place has been completely blocked up, and is even at the present time in a deplorable state; a matter which presses heavily upon residents of all classes.

The Eclipse Company have had their dam and tail-race severely injured, causing the party (some twelve men) about three months extra work repairing damages.

At Duffers and No Town various parties have sustained severe losses in dams and tail-races being carried away; but I do not think the damage has been nearly so great or extensive as that occasioned by the flood of 1872.

During the past year fresh ground has been opened up at Brown's Terrace, in the Nobles district, which has given a fair return to the men employed upon it. The terrace seems to run into the same flat ground into a portion of which the Mosquito lead was traced, and where a good many men at one time were engaged in mining; and I have heard from experienced miners that it is likely this flat, and others of a similar character in the district, will be found to contain runs of gold at a deeper level than any that have yet been worked in the valley.

North Beach Workings up to Razorback.—The mining population on the beach has fallen off during the last two years, which is, I think, attributable to the superior attractions of other parts of the district, both as regards the amount of wages to be earned, as also from the great discomfort attendant upon the life of a beach miner, who generally works alone and at uncertain hours (having to time his operations to suit the tide), and also from being shut out from anything like relaxation or amusement in his spare time. The character of the workings about Razorback has always rendered prospecting in that neighbourhood peculiarly uncertain, nothing approaching a definite lead having ever been discovered there. Instances of heavy yields are, however, occasionally made public, and serve as an encouragement to those residing in the locality to remain. There have been a few good claims opened up in this neighbourhood during the past year.

Half Ounce.—The class of claims held here has gradually changed from those of ordinary size to extended claims and leaseholds, and the consequence has been the erection of substantial machinery and a tolerably settled population. Several of the works in the locality have been most expensively and ingeniously constructed, occupying the owners many weeks in formation. The Eclipse Company (the first formed in Half Ounce Creek at the upper end) have done an immense amount of work, and were beginning to reap some return from their labour when the late flood carried away their tail-race and dam. The Company are now repairing damages, but they have sustained a heavy loss, and it will, as I have already stated, take them some considerable time to get the claim into working order again. Another Company, the Just-in-Time, have started at the head of Half Ounce Creek, and are now (having struck gold) actively engaged in working their ground in a very systematic manner. The lead worked by this Company will probably be traced back into the hills about Napoleon's. Lower down Half Ounce Creek, near Granville, there are many claims worked by the aid of machinery, water-wheels, and pumping gear. Some of the miners there are doing very well, and the majority making good wages. Mining operations have been vigorously carried on in this part of the district during the past year, and the population has settled down in a permanent manner.

At Brandy Jack's the leases granted are being worked, and in one of them gold has been struck; but the party have been unfortunate in having suffered from accidents to their machinery, which have greatly retarded their progress; but they are now pushing on with their work, and when they have "opened out" their ground, will employ a number of wages-men in addition to the shareholders.

Duffer's.—The workings here have undergone no material change since I last reported. The creek still supports about the same population, who are almost all employed in ground-slucing. The late flood did a considerable amount of damage there, filling up tail-races which had taken the parties who owned them many months to construct.

Teviot.—A small number of miners are working here, but the place has not advanced as I had hoped it would have done from the reports I received about it from the men holding claims on the terrace.

Napoleon Hill.—Some seventy-five men find steady employment hereabouts, but a water supply at a sufficient elevation is alone wanting to open up an almost limitless extent of payable ground, as it could, if once brought in at a level to work Napoleon Hill, be made available for Half Ounce, Duffer's, Granville, and Nobles' workings. I have heard with much satisfaction that a surveyor is now taking levels from various creeks, with a view of reporting to the General Government on the facilities that exist for bringing in a permanent supply of water to this part of the district. Until this is done, the work-