

WESTLAND.

No. 8.

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

SIR,—

Warden's Office, Greymouth, April, 1874.

I have the honor to furnish the following general report on the district under my charge, for the year ending the 31st March last past.

The various workings in the district may be all classed under the head of alluvial, no quartz reefs having been found up to the present time. Mining operations in most of the localities have continued steady, and show fair progress; but at the same time there is a decrease of the mining population, yield of gold, and revenue, as compared with the previous year, which may be attributed in some measure to the Palmer rush, and the demand for labour to carry on the extensive public works now being effected in this district.

The heavy outlay in the construction and extension of water-races which command the higher terraces, show that the proprietors have every confidence in the neighbourhood where these works are being carried on, and that the new ground thus opened will well repay the cost incurred. Still there remains a considerable extent of auriferous country untouched, for want of water, which might be made available, but the cost of construction, and numerous obstacles that present themselves, appear too great for private enterprise to contend with, and unless the Government will undertake the construction of such works, the country in question is likely to remain unproductive for years to come.

The majority of agricultural leases applied for having been refused after survey, in consequence of the Waste Lands Board declining to recommend them, some further provision is requisite whereby the Warden might grant small areas of land, not exceeding two acres, to miners for cultivation only, without any right of purchase or interference with mining pursuits, for which certificates would be issued and a low rent charged. There are no mining leases in existence in this district.

In the Greymouth sub-district there has been a great falling off on the works in the Stoney Lead and South Beach. The North Star Company have worked out their original claims, sold their engine, and, since the Palmer rush and recent floods, have broken up the party and abandoned their works. The owners of the Great Extended and Leviathan water-races have no demand for water in this locality, and are using the water themselves for sluicing ground on the Stoney Lead.

A few claims are still held by miners who are in possession of water-rights, and have comfortable homesteads about them. There is a scattered population in and around Rutherglen, Deep Lead, Salt Water Creek, Welchman's, and Yankey Creek, in possession of small water-rights, making fair wages. Hughes and party, who held the first water-right for three heads out of the Salt Water Creek for the last seven years, sold out a short time ago for £500 to a party of Cornishmen who have been in that neighbourhood for several years, and well know the value of the water and the ground to be worked.

In the Arnold sub-district a small rush took place last October, to a terrace on the bank of the Arnold River, but was soon abandoned as no gold was obtainable outside the prospectors' ordinary claim, where half a pennyweight to the dish had been washed out. Some of the old races formerly brought into Maori Gully have been extended three miles round the spurs and sides of the ranges, to command the high ground about the Still Water, at a height of 200 to 300 feet above the bed of the creek, and shares in these races have been disposed of at high figures—from £150 upwards. There is a small population working in the surrounding gullies, and about 130 Chinese have set into work, principally in Waimea, Italian, and Rielly's Gullies. They have bought up several water-rights from Europeans at high prices.

The building for Court and police quarters at Maori Gully has been erected, and was handed over for occupation in February last.

In the Clifton sub-district, the mining localities known as Irishman's, Carriboo, Fuschia, Mosquito, Corkeye, Cockabulla, and Maori Creek, and other small gullies, maintain the usual quota of miners, many of whom have built themselves comfortable cottages, and hold good claims and water-rights yielding fair returns.

The Hibernian Water-Race Company have completed their race, and are now in full work on good ground, besides letting out a small quantity of water.

The New River Water-Race Company are progressing slowly and have many difficulties to contend with. They have constructed about seven miles of the race, and have about thirty heads of water to let on payable ground which heretofore could not be wrought, no water being available. The Company have about three miles more to construct, and have decided to carry the water by iron pipes, for a distance of 400 yards, across the Deep Gorge at the Limestone, instead of erecting a flume 120 feet in height.

There are a few miners working at Cameron's, where payable ground has been opened, but the place is almost isolated for want of a horse track.

Several new and substantial buildings have been erected in the township of Marsden and Maori Creek. The completion of the new road between Greymouth and Marsden has opened up direct communication with the latter place, and when completed to Maori Creek will prove a material aid in the advancement and prosperity of that part of the Grey district. No steps have been taken as yet to remove the Court and police camp from Clifton township (long since deserted) to that of Maori Creek. Police protection and supervision are much required at both these townships, they being centres of a mining population, and containing several public houses in each.

There are 115 Chinese now residing and working in various parts of the district.

The Greenstone district was placed under my charge in April, 1873, owing to the reduction made in the Wardens' Department; and at the same time Sergeant McInnis, in charge of the police at Greenstone, was appointed Clerk of the Resident Magistrate's Court and Gold Receiver for that district.

The principal workings are those on the Duke of Edinburgh Terrace, adjoining the township, where ground-sluicing is carried out on an extensive scale, the face of the terrace being cut down to a