

spectors say could be made at an easy gradient, for a sum of £500 at the most. I wish to point out that a dray-road is now nearly completed to within one mile of the junction of Brown's River and the Aorere, and the pack-track above alluded to would, if made, open the country to the saddle of the Goulard Downs, over which it is possible to drive stock to the Heaphy and thence to the Karamea; therefore the formation of this small track would be the means of opening up the valley of the Aorere to the settlers at Karamea. It would be of great advantage to this district, even should the supposed gold field not prove a payable one. I may add that this field was worked by a few men years ago, who all state that the formation of the track suggested would be the means of enabling many miners to set to work there, as several parties would at once take up claims if they had facilities for getting supplies brought on the ground.

I have, &c.,

FRANK GUINNESS,

Warden.

The Under-Secretary for Gold Fields, Wellington.

No. 7

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

SIR,—

Warden's Office, Westport, 14th May, 1881.

I have the honor to forward herewith the statistical returns for the Buller District for the past twelve months, and to make the following general report:—

WESTPORT MINING DISTRICT.

Mining operations in the various centres known as Addison's Flat, Buller Road, Northern Terraces, Waimangaroa, Mokihinui, and Karamea continue steady and yield fair returns to all who have command of a good supply of water. No new discoveries have been reported, but in many instances where ground is available large areas have been taken up either under lease, extended claims, or double area regulations.

At Waimangaroa a small portion of the ground, formerly withdrawn from the gold fields for railway and coal-mining purposes, but again thrown open by Proclamation in July, 1880, has been occupied for mining purposes. Several residence areas have also been taken up along the south bank of the river on each side of the Wellington Company's line of railway, and in most instances good cottages have been erected thereon.

In February last I visited the Mokihinui River, which appeared to possess a good bar and bar harbour, under a bold bluff and steep ranges on the north side, closely timbered to the water's edge. A valuable seam of coal had been opened out by Mr. Charles Corr, about three miles up the river. Vessels of light draft could be taken up for two miles, and from thence a good tramway, one mile in length, had been constructed to the mine. The coal had a good bright appearance, but I am not aware whether the quality has ever been tested.

At the Karamea there are some twenty or thirty miners working in different localities, most of whom occupy and cultivate small patches of land. This settlement is almost isolated, the road from Westport being almost impassable, and in many places very dangerous for either man or horse.

The Westport Coal Company have got into full working order, and are sending large quantities to the port for shipment.

CHARLESTON SUB-DISTRICT

The principal methods of working are: Ground-sluicing on the terraces and creeks, black sand claims on the sea beaches, and gold-saving tables set in the creeks and tail-races.

There are six or eight claims on the south end of the Nine Mile Beach, north of Charleston, which have been fairly worked throughout the year, with profitable results to the owners, as they are able to secure the gold before it has time to travel further north, after intercepting it at low water, some 800 to 900 feet from high-water mark. The other claims on the Nine Mile Beach, and the beaches in and about Brighton, have been covered up with grey sand for the greater part of the year, and therefore unworkable; but the owners set considerable value on them, and keep them regularly protected by registration.

The use of the tables for saving the fine gold in the tailings washed down the tail-races and creeks from the terrace workings has become quite an industry in itself, and the owners, commonly termed fly-catchers, earn good wages during ordinary wet weather, but the tables in themselves are costly, and during floods are liable to be either damaged or swept away, thereby entailing great outlay in repairs.

The want of water is a great drawback in mining operations; the miners, having chiefly to depend on the rainfall, have erected dams and reservoirs wherever possible to keep up a regular supply, but during the past year they have had comparatively little broken time, and may generally be said to have earned fair returns for their labour.

At Croninville sixteen extended claims, averaging 4 acres each, have been taken up. The ground is very deep, and ground-sluicing is the principal mode of working, the tailings being run into the Gorge and Totara River, whilst the larger stones are thrown back on the worked ground. About half of these claims have been working and washing out good yields of gold; but the enormous quantity of tailings run out has so blocked up the machine sites that the owners have had to abandon the washing sites, and are now driving tunnels from the Totara River, some 300 to 400 feet in length, to their claims. Good prospects have been obtained from all these claims, but the cost of opening them out and preparing the washing machines is a very heavy item. Frequently during the year the supply of water to the claims in full work has run short. When all the claims are in full work the supply will be altogether inadequate unless other races are brought in from other sources of supply in the vicinity. The agricultural leases held by Mr. Costello on the Totara River, about two miles below the workings, are likely to prove rather a serious obstacle to the profitable working of their claims through the running of large quantities of tailings into the river bed.

Several small parties have been out prospecting up the ranges in and about the Totara and Four Mile Rivers; but, so far, nothing of any consequence has been discovered, although good indications of gold have been obtained.