

The past year has been singularly uneventful as regards mining in the Maerewhenua District. There have been no new discoveries, and no extraordinary yields of gold. Still I am happy to be able to say that the few miners who work constantly at the Maerewhenua and its vicinity have as a rule been doing fairly well, better, probably, on the average, than at some places where there is more stir and excitement. The work being mainly sluicing, miners are largely dependent on the character of the seasons for their success. This year there has been generally a good supply of water, and the benefit has been felt in the working of the claims.

It is not easy to estimate the yield of gold, as there is no bank at Livingstone, and consequently no escort. I think, however, it will be safe to set the total at about 600oz., which, at £3 15s. per ounce, would come to £2,250, or about £65 per man. This does not perhaps seem much, but it is to be borne in mind that, though these men are miners, they do not exclusively occupy themselves with mining. Most of them own a few cattle or horses, and have gardens, &c., to occupy their spare time. Most of the regular miners have been in the same localities for several years, and seem quite settled in the district.

Though in my return I show no agricultural leases, it is not to be supposed there is no cultivation. On the contrary, besides large freeholds, some of which are being farmed on a very extensive scale, there are in the neighbourhood of the diggings a number of smaller farms, some of which are held on deferred payment.

I have, &c.,

H. W. ROBINSON,

Warden.

The Under-Secretary for Gold Fields, Wellington.

No. 16.

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

SIR,—

Warden's, Office, Dunedin, 30th April, 1884.

I have the honour to forward herewith the annual returns of particulars relating to the Hindon Mining District for the year ending the 31st March, 1884.

Beyond what has been stated in previous reports as to the necessity for a water-supply, and the desirability of testing the many well-defined quartz lodes by boring, the present position and prospects of the district do not call for any special remark.

It is to be regretted that operations during the past year, both in alluvial and quartz workings, have been almost at a standstill, and that in the meantime there is little or nothing to induce the belief that a great deal will be done during the ensuing twelve months.

As indicated in my last annual report a number of gold-mining leases have had to be cancelled for non-payment of rent, there being not more than three now in force.

No stone has been crushed during the year.

As regards settlement, which may be said to be steadily progressing, several additional areas have been taken up during the year under both the deferred-payment and perpetual-leasing systems.

The population of the district, which includes settlers, miners, and workmen on the Otago Central Railway, is estimated at about the same as last year, viz., 300, for, although there are fewer miners at the present time, there are more settlers and railway workmen.

I have, &c.,

J. P. MAITLAND,

Warden.

The Under-Secretary for Gold Fields, Wellington.

No. 17.

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

SIR,—

Invercargill, 30th April, 1884.

I have the honour to forward herewith the annual statistical returns for the Orepuki and Longwood District for the year ending the 31st March, 1884, and to report that no changes have occurred in the prospects of the district of sufficient importance to call for further remark, mining matters remaining as nearly as possible in the same position as at the date of my last annual report.

I have, &c.,

HENRY McCULLOCH,

Warden.

The Under-Secretary for Gold Fields, Wellington.

No. 18.

Mr J. DAND, Manager, Nelson Creek Water-race, to the UNDER-SECRETARY for GOLD FIELDS.

SIR,—

Office, Nelson Creek Water-race, Hatters' Terrace, 1st April, 1884.

I have the honour to submit annual report on the transactions connected with the working of the Nelson Creek Water-race during the year ending the 31st March, 1884.

The revenue derived from sales of water has been £1,594 15s. 10d., and the expenditure on maintenance, £1,103 5s. 2d.; thus leaving a balance of £491 10s. 8d. profit on the working of the race.

The approximate amount of gold obtained during the year by the miners who were using water from the race has been 2,356oz., representing the value of £9,011 14s.; and the average number of miners employed has been forty-four. After deducting sales of water from the value of gold obtained, it leaves £7,416 18s. 2d. as the total earnings of the miners employed; being £168 11s. 4d. each per annum, or £3 4s. 10d. per week.

The works included in maintenance during the year has consisted of considerable repairs to bridges and flumes, retimbering a large portion of the tunnels, and the other ordinary work of maintenance.