

No. 8.

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

SIR,—

Warden's Office, Reefton, 12th May, 1884.

I have the honour to forward herewith statistical returns for year ended 31st March last, and to report on the Inangahua District during same period.

The past year was in many respects the worst this district has experienced for a very long time. This may in a great measure be attributed to the rash speculations two years ago, the very heavy calls made during the last two years (amounting to no less a sum than £110,801), the non-success of some of the new undertakings, and depression in mining circles. The yield of gold shows, unfortunately, a decrease compared with the previous year: the reason for this, however, is given further on in the detailed accounts of the mines. There has been a great amount of work done in all parts of the field in and about the several mines in prospecting, in opening them up properly, and in the erection and completion of machinery of different kinds, the whole involving the expenditure of large sums of money.

During the year a great number of goldmining occupation certificates and leases, applied for during the previous two years, have been cancelled, and I cannot deprecate too strongly the taking up of leases for purely speculative purposes, for it is in this way large sums of money greatly required for the proper development of the district are diverted.

I will now pass on and say a few words with reference to the mines, commencing in the Boatman's District.

Welcome Company.—The erection of winding gear and plant connected with the rock-borer has been completed. The machinery has been placed inside the mine in a chamber to which I made reference in my last report. From the engine inside the mine a flue 800ft. in length has been constructed through the old workings, which carries off the smoke, and at the same time serves to ventilate the mine. This claim has been for some years past one of the chief gold-producing mines in this district. During the past year, however, crushing operations have not been continuous, and consequently the yield of gold has not quite come up to former returns. Since the completion of the machinery, No. 7 level has been properly opened up, and very good stone is being obtained. At the machine-house a patent-lift tailings-pump has been erected. This pump lifts the tailings direct from the tables to the berdans, and thus effects a considerable saving of labour. Everything here is now in perfect order, consequently good returns and dividends may be expected for some time.

Fiery Cross.—This company, after performing a lot of uphill work, has sent a quantity of good stone to the battery, and from this have been enabled to clear off all liabilities, and declare dividends to the amount of £3,000. Crushing operations are being continued, and the company has good prospects.

Hopeful.—The work has not been productive of beneficial results. Small crushings have been had from time to time; the yield, however, has not, owing to the cost of raising the stone, been sufficient to encourage the company to do any further work for the present. The workings have been let on tribute, and the tributers are now waiting to have a crushing at the Just-in-Time and Fiery Cross Battery.

Eureka.—This company is still employed in driving the incline tunnel to strike the Welcome reef, and have attained a distance of 1,084ft. The average driving with the rock-borer is, according to the nature of the ground, from 70ft. to 80ft. per month.

Just-in-Time has been working, in conjunction with the Imperial (now part owners of the shaft and winding-gear erected here), in driving a cross-cut 260ft. east from the bottom of the shaft along the boundary of the two claims. The Just-in-Time is driving north from the cross-cut, and have reached a distance of about 340ft., 240ft. requiring yet to be driven to reach the surveyed position of the eastern reef.

Imperial has driven south from cross-cut just mentioned to a point near where the lode should have been in that level had the reef had an easterly underlay, as is usual in this locality. The present work consists of sinking on the reef from the upper levels, where the reef had turned over to the west. The reef is somewhat broken, but it is thought it will make stronger when it assumes the proper underlay.

Walhalla has been prospecting for the old western reef of the Just-in-Time Company by rising, on what was thought by some as the track of the reef, from the Boatman's Creek level. Work has now been temporarily suspended.

In the Larry's Creek District work has been confined to the Caledonian Company, which has been prospecting with an uprise from the lowest level, and is now driving south on the track of a reef and getting well under the old No. 2 South Larry's Creek workings.

In Italian Gully a party of miners have taken the Golden Arch Claim on tribute.

The Low-level Tunnel Company at Boatman's has completed the erection of rock-boring machinery.

In the Murray Creek District I would first refer to the Black's Point Low-level Tunnel Company. Work is still being carried on here, but, as hand-labour only is employed, progress is naturally slow. Rock-boring machinery could be used to great advantage: the company, however, is unable to obtain such machinery, as the cost would be too great when it is taken into consideration that calls are limited to one penny per month.

Inglewood.—This company has, in conjunction with the Phoenix, completed the erection of a 10-head battery driven by steam. Crushing was started at the battery on stone from this mine, but was discontinued after about ten days for want of water for the tables, the season having been an unusually dry one. In order to meet this difficulty and to economize the water, a pulsometer has been erected, which has, I believe, been found to answer the purpose for which it was required. Work has been going on, off and on, in this mine for some years past, and stone from time to time