

1886.

NEW ZEALAND.

BIG BAY AND RED HILL DISTRICTS

(REPORT ON), BY T. CAREY AND R. HYNDMAN, PROSPECTORS.

Laid on the Table by the Hon. Mr. Larnach, with the Leave of the House.

No. 1.

Mr. T. CAREY to the Hon. the MINISTER of MINES.

SIR,—

Wellington, 27th July, 1886.

I have the honour to report to you that the Red Hill prospecting party cut a track from Big Bay to the Red Hills, about twenty-eight miles. The first eleven miles is through a flat country, through which several large creeks run. In all these creeks there is plenty of gold, which the floods bring down from a range where the creeks rise, the range being about one mile from the track. The timber on this flat consists of black-birch, red-birch, and red-pine. This flat is about eight miles long and about four miles wide. The remainder of the track to the Bald Hills adjoining the Red Hill is through and over steep ranges. The timber on these ranges consists of totara, rata, red-birch, and silver-pine. The width of the track is about 17ft., and is well cleared. Five of the larger creeks are bridged. The time occupied in cutting the track to get down to the Cascade River was about nine weeks. Four of the party commenced clearing away some slips where John McKay's supposed tunnel was; the other two were out on the Red Hills getting specimens. The time occupied in clearing away the slips was about eight weeks, the balance of the time being spent in swagging tools and provisions from Big Bay.

The party left the Red Hills on the 17th June, the snow being about a foot deep where the tents were pitched. The pass through the Red Hills to the Cascade River was blocked with snow; the party therefore had to cross the Cascade River to the north side, and cut their way through the bush to Jackson's River, distance about twenty-four miles.

There is splendid land on this route, and also some valuable timber, consisting of red-pine, black-birch, white-pine, silver-pine, kawaka, rata, and red-birch. Between the belts of timber there is considerable open country, or what are termed "pakihis." The land is good, the kawaka, or New Zealand cedar, growing here is of the best kind.

After crossing Jackson's Saddle we came upon the survey track, which took us on to the Arawata River and into Jackson's Bay, after a ten days' journey through a part of the country never traversed by Europeans. A very good track could be made from the present survey track to the Red Hills, the distance being about twenty miles, with an easy gradient.

The amount of work done by the Red Hill prospecting party, and the distance they have gone through a new country, in such a short space of time, speaks for itself.

There is also another part of the district in the Provincial District of Otago, commencing on the south side of the Awarua River, and thence by Martin's Bay to Kaipa River, the ranges on which are all quartz-bearing. The gold I have seen obtained from this district hangs on the quartz, and looks as if it had been broken from the reef. As it does not show any sign of being water-worn, it is the opinion of those who have seen this sample of gold that the reefs are not far distant, and, further, that they are rich, as only a little gold has been found on the beach; the deduction being that the reefs still contain the gold.

A few parties came to Martin's Bay at different times to prospect, but were unprepared for the task, thinking that the settlers could supply them with necessaries for prosecuting the search. The settlers were unable to do this, as they can scarcely manage to provide for their own wants, and the prospectors went away disappointed and gave the district a bad name, although they did not even wash a dish of earth, nor did they try anywhere off the sea-beach. It can therefore be easily understood that their prospecting did not prove successful.

One man, working at the mouth of the Kipa River, is getting gold and rubies.

Looking up the river from Martin's Bay there is a large valley, girded by some nice-looking terraces, which appear to be gold-bearing. No one has been up to these terraces, except settlers looking for stray cattle, and, as no prospecting has been attempted, it cannot be expected that gold or minerals could be found.

Leaving Martin's Bay District and returning to Big Bay, north of the Awarua River, in the Westland Provincial District, it is known that a few years ago one or two parties were working on