

Mokihinui, and Karamea. A track about two miles in length is now under construction from the Denniston Plateau to Cedar Creek, near Mount William. A small rush took place to this locality a few months ago. At one time there were about thirty men on the ground, some of whom made considerably more than wages; but the majority were not successful in discovering payable ground, and there are now only about twelve men at work there. Gold has also been found at Mackley's Creek, in the same neighbourhood, during the past year; but only one or two parties obtained it in remunerative quantities. The track up the Mokihinui River has been extended as far as Specimen Creek and up Rough and Tumble Creek for three and a half miles. At the Lyell end of the proposed road to Mokihinui about two miles have been completed. It is eminently desirable that this track should be completed without undue delay; and the same may be said of the tracks between Mokihinui, Karamea, and Collingwood, as they will afford facilities for exploring and prospecting a district about which scarcely anything is yet known except that it is bounded on all sides by well-timbered country, known to abound in minerals of various kinds.

Population.—There has been a steady increase of population at Westport and the surrounding districts of late. I estimate that the borough and the ridings of Wareatea and Karamea contain about 3,700 inhabitants. At Charleston there has been a slight decrease, and I do not think the population now exceeds 700. It is difficult to arrive at an approximate estimate of the population in the extensive districts of Lyell and Murchison, as the inhabitants are scattered over a wide area of country, of which many parts are very difficult of access; but I think the population must now be fully a thousand.

Gold-mining Leases.—During the period covered by this report gold-mining leases have been dealt with as follows: At Westport—applied for, 17; granted, 8; cancelled, 7. At Lyell—applied for, 8; granted, 10; cancelled, 7. At Murchison—applied for, 8; cancelled, 3. At Charleston—granted, 1.

The usual statistical tables, furnishing full information with regard to matters not referred to in this report, are transmitted herewith. In conclusion, I am pleased to be able to state that the prospects of the districts under my charge have greatly improved since the date of my last report, and present indications fully warrant the belief that the improvement will continue, and lead to a more prosperous era in mining generally.

I have, &c.,

FRANK BIRD, Warden.

TABLE showing the Number of Registered Mining Companies and the Total Amount of Capital paid up, together with the Amount of Calls made and Dividends declared, the Quantity of Quartz crushed, and the Yield of Gold therefrom, in the Nelson South-west Gold-mining District from the 1st April, 1885, to the 31st March, 1886:—

Name of Company.	Total Amount of Capital paid up.	Calls made.	Dividends declared.	Quantity of Quartz crushed.	Yield.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	Tons.	Oz.
Great Republic Company	26,916 13 4	2,216 13 4	1,900 0 0	1,065	1,434
Red Queen Company	28,500 0 0	400 0 0	1,200 0 0	1,005	1,431
Guiding Star Company	2,800 0 0	.. ..	.. ..	.. ..	.. ..
Mokihinui Company	14,350 0 0	500 0 0	.. ..	30	18
Golden Crown Company	13,000 0 0	.. ..	.. ..	.. ..	.. ..
Nile Company	12,200 0 0	200 0 0	.. ..	.. ..	.. ..
Constitutional Company	12,100 0 0	.. ..	.. ..	.. ..	.. ..
Buller Company	12,100 0 0	100 0 0	.. ..	.. ..	.. ..
Wellesley Company	12,200 0 0	200 0 0	.. ..	.. ..	.. ..
Southern Light Company	12,500 0 0	350 0 0	.. ..	.. ..	.. ..
Mokihinui Morning Star Company	12,300 0 0	.. ..	.. ..	.. ..	.. ..
South Pacific Company	18,122 0 0	286 0 0	.. ..	.. ..	.. ..
Smile of Fortune Company	12,000 0 0	500 0 0	.. ..	.. ..	.. ..
Fairdown Company	2,500 0 0	125 0 0	.. ..	.. ..	.. ..
Totals	165,588 13 4	4,877 13 4	3,100 0 0	2,100	2,883

No. 9.

Mr. Warden BIRD to the UNDER-SECRETARY of MINES.

SIR,—

Warden's Office, Reefton, 3rd May, 1886.

I have the honour to forward herewith the statistical returns for the year ended 31st March, 1886, and also to report generally on the Inangahua District for the same period.

I much regret that the past year has by no means been a successful one, owing to various causes, not the least being the exceptional drought, which threw the district back many months, and caused an enforced idleness in many of the mines. The calls made were somewhat smaller than the previous year, amounting to £24,565 2s. 1d. The dividends amounted to £14,500, and were paid by one company—viz., the Keep It Dark Quartz-mining Company. The quantity