

ROXBURGH DISTRICT.

The principal workings here are on the banks of the Clutha River, and a few parties are also dredging its bed. There is a large flat on the opposite side of the river from the Township of Roxburgh, where seven frontage mining-claims have been worked for the last eighteen years, from which a large amount of gold has been obtained. The owners of these claims—Waigh and party, Anderson and party, Carlow and party, Coulter, Leary, Pelford, and Houghton and party—have all arranged to put the whole of their claims into a large company, and bring in a large water-supply to work them on a different principle. The method on which some of the claims have been worked is draining the ground with Californian pumps worked by overshot water-wheels, the wash-drift being then hauled up an incline on trucks. They now propose to work the deep ground on the hydraulic elevating principle, after sluicing off all the top stuff down to such a level as the river will admit. To get a sufficient quantity of water to work the ground on this principle a high-level water-race will have to be constructed from the Teviot River; and it is also proposed, if they are successful in floating the company, to construct a dam near the head of the Teviot, at Dismal Swamp, for the purpose of storing water to work with during dry seasons.

Some idea may be formed of the value of the ground in this locality when it is stated that two of the claims mentioned last year produced 2,300oz. of gold; and, from what I could learn, equally as good ground is likely to extend back into the flat. Indeed, from the appearance of this flat, it is likely that good runs of gold-bearing wash will be got, here and there, all the way back to the foot of the terrace, for there is no doubt the river has been flowing all over here at one time. Only the easily-worked portions of the Clutha Valley have yet been touched. Rich leads will yet be found in many of the flats all along the side of the river, and I do not know of any place better worth prospecting than this flat and Miller's Flat; but the latter flat would require a large capital to carry on extensive mining operations successfully.

White Reef Company.—This company's ground is situate on the face of the Old Man Range, about two miles from the main road, between Roxburgh and Alexandra. Ground-sluicing was carried on here for several years before any attempt was made to prospect for a quartz reef, and the whole of the gold found showed that it had travelled no distance, as it was porous, with sharp edges with small pieces of quartz attached. This company was formed in 1883, with a capital of £10,000, of which £2,363 has been paid up in calls, and dividends to the extent of £250 have been paid. The reef was traced into the hill from the surface, but, after getting in a little way with an adit-level, the ground was so broken and tossed about that the course of the reef was not followed. The adit-level was extended first in one direction and then in another, following the most tortuous course possible. Hundreds of pounds have been wasted here owing to men controlling the workings of the mine who had little or no knowledge of the system of carrying on quartz-mining operations. This adit is now constructed for 650ft. and the lode is partially stoped out for 520ft. in length. The lode is from 1ft. to 4ft. in thickness, but it can scarcely be termed a quartz reef; there is very little solid stone. The lode chiefly consists of quartz gravel, and, judging from a small handful of this lode material I saw washed, it should give very good returns for working. The last crushing yielded at the rate of 25dwt. per ton. There is a crushing-battery of five heads of stamps, driven by a turbine water-wheel, erected near the mouth of the adit-level. To carry on this mine with success a good deal of expenditure is required to put it in order. The whole of the workings are merely of a prospecting nature, which will absorb a great deal of the gold in expenses which really ought to go towards paying dividends to the shareholders.

CROMWELL DISTRICT.

The principal gold-workings in this district are at Bannockburn, where the claims are all worked by hydraulic sluicing. The Pipeclay Gully Sludge-channel being now completed, it is the means of a great deal of ground being worked that otherwise could not; but from what I learned from the miners who are working it the ground is, as a rule, very poor—the average earnings would not exceed £2 a week per man. The miners pay 6d. a day of eight hours for every sluice-head of water they let into the sludge-channel. This, together with whatever gold the channel may save, is the only revenue that the Channel Company receive. The channel has not yet been cleaned up, so that they have no idea of what amount of gold will be got. At the time of my visit there were six claims tailing into this channel, and three more getting ready to do so.

There are five parties working on the fall into Smith's Gully, but from what I could learn none of them are making large wages. It is considered by some of the miners here that if a sludge-channel were constructed up Smith's Gully there is a great deal of ground in that locality which would be worked; but to construct a channel up this gully would be a heavy undertaking.

Cromwell Quartz Company.—An English syndicate has arranged to spend a certain amount of money on prospecting this mine, and if payable quartz is found to float a large company on the English market. The mine has been at a standstill for a considerable time, but a commencement is now being made to resume operations—to sink the shaft to a depth of 600ft. At the time of my visit to this district, pumping-machinery was in course of transit to the mine. When this is erected sinking of the shaft will be continued.

Mount Criffel.—There are two water-races now constructed and about ten sluice-heads of water brought on to the field, which enables some of the claims to give good returns. About sixty men were employed last season, and the amount of gold obtained about 1,200oz. A rush has taken place at Fat Boys, between Mount Pisa and Criffel, and some gold has been got leading into deep ground. A party of miners are testing the deep ground by boring, and are now down to a depth of 100ft. without getting either bottom or any auriferous wash-drift.

ALEXANDRA DISTRICT.

There is very little mining carried on here, with the exception of some parties who are working on the banks of the river and also engaged in dredging operations. The Wellman dredger has been