

(that of Marshall's) none have been even prospected during the year. The above-named Wallsend Mine keeps up a steady output, employing some twenty men on the works.

West Wanganui.—At this place (now private property) there has been little done for some time. There is, however, some movement in that direction.

I have, &c.,

WM. GIBBS, Warden.

The Under-Secretary, Mines Department, Wellington.

No. 7.

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

SIR,—

Warden's Office, Nelson, 6th April, 1888.

I have the honour to forward herewith the various forms with which you furnished me, filled up with the required information relative to the Karamea Goldfield District. I can only report that nothing worthy of notice has occurred in the district under my charge during the year ending on the 31st of March last.

I have, &c.,

OSWALD CURTIS, Warden.

The Under-Secretary, Mines Department, Wellington.

No. 8.

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

SIR,—

Warden's Office, Westport, 22nd May, 1888.

I have the honour to forward herewith the statistical returns for the year ended 31st March, 1888, and also to report generally on the Karamea District for the same period.

Owing to recent extension of the district under my jurisdiction my time has been so much taken up in travelling and holding Courts that I have not hitherto had time to furnish the customary annual report upon mining matters. Since my last report two additional Courts—Ahaura and Owen—have been placed under my charge. The former is seventy-eight miles from Westport, and is visited monthly, whilst Owen, at which a quarterly sitting of the Warden's Court is held, is eighty-four miles distant from Westport in an opposite direction. With roads as bad as they have been of late the travelling involved in working this district is a serious tax upon one's time and energy, and consequently office-work has frequently been attended to at nights, after a long and exhausting day in the saddle over wretched roads.

WESTPORT.

Mining matters have been quiet here during the last twelve months, chiefly owing to the unprofitable results attending the quartz-crushing operations at Seatonville. A small rush took place at Mokihinui last December, but none of the claim-holders have been able to bottom their shafts yet, owing to the wetness of the ground and want of adequate appliances for disposing of the water. Several small finds of gold in the high country behind Denniston have occurred during the past twelve months, and, although they have been mere patches lasting only a few weeks each, they have nevertheless proved highly acceptable to the lucky discoverers. No doubt a more extensive field will be discovered in this locality sooner or later; judging from the good patches which are found there from time to time it should be rich in gold. In the year under review thirty-six applications for special claims and licensed holdings were received at Westport. Thirty-two were granted and two gold-mining leases were cancelled. Most of the special claims recently taken up are to be worked by dredges, and some of the holders have already made arrangements for providing the necessary machinery, whilst others are awaiting the result of dredging operations to be commenced shortly at Hokitika and Five-mile Beach before committing themselves to a heavy expenditure for machinery and appliances. Several areas have been taken up along the course and the bed of the Buller River, which it is also intended to work by dredging. It is well known that considerable quantities of gold exist in the bed of the river, but no satisfactory method of getting it out has yet been adopted. Should the dredging system succeed a vast field will be opened up for remunerative labour.

The Great Republic Quartz-mining Company has been industriously engaged in opening up their mine. Dividends have been few and far between, but a great deal of useful work has been done, and is still being done, towards the systematic and economical development of the company's property. I believe one dividend of 6d. per scrip has been paid during the year. Twenty men are now employed by the company, and the directors and manager feel satisfied that before long there will be no difficulty in keeping up a continuous supply of stone at the battery.

Denniston Quartz-mining Company.—This company has been formed for the purpose of prospecting ground situate near Denniston, Mount Rochfort. A shaft has been sunk over 100ft., intersecting several well-defined gold-bearing leaders, some at almost the bottom of the shaft. Cross-drives are shortly to be put in, when it is expected a reef will be found. Three men are employed.

Fairdown Gold-mining Company.—Owing to the numerous interruptions to work, such as shortness of water, &c., this company has done but little work of late. The operations at present being carried on are the construction of new tables and formation of a tail-race, which will be completed in about a month. The prospects of the claim are good, as the adjoining property, the Wareatea, has been prospected and found to contain highly payable ground. Mr. J. Guthrie, an experienced black-sand miner, is now in charge of the Fairdown Company's claim.