

worked in the Fiery Cross will enter the Hopeful ground, but at such a depth as would make it a difficult and expensive undertaking to work from the Hopeful claim.

South Hopeful.—A few months ago a run of gold-bearing stone was struck, and this is now being worked. The stone at present is of small dimensions. A trial crushing of fifty tons will be commenced shortly.

Argus.—This is a new claim on the south side of Boatman's Creek, to the eastward of the Welcome line of reef. The reef is rather small, but is said to be of good quality. There will be a trial crushing of fifty tons shortly, and should this prove payable, the company contemplate erecting a small battery of their own.

General.—Work is being done in several other claims in different parts of the district, but they do not now call for particular notice. At the present time the district is certainly looking very well; indeed, better than it has done for years, as, judging from appearances, there is reasonable hope for improvement in the returns from the various mines in the different parts of the district. The Globe and Progress, in Devil's Creek; the Big River, in Big River District; the Sir Francis Drake, at Merrijigs; Keep It Dark, Nil Desperandum, and No. 2 South Keep it Dark, at Crushington; the Venus and Inglewood, in Murray Creek; the Welcome and Fiery Cross, at Boatman's, will all shortly be crushing. The district has to depend to a great extent upon its own resources, and the capital available being thus somewhat limited companies are not able to push ahead progressive works with that speed which would so greatly tend to success, and consequently the development of the district is slow. I have every confidence in the district, and feel sure that what is required to make it the principal mining centre in the colony is the introduction of capital, judicious expenditure, and careful and proper management. The district is a large one, and, although it has been opened for a number of years, it is not yet half prospected. In conclusion, I must thank managers of companies and others for ready and valuable information.

I have, &c.,

FRANK BIRD, Warden.

The Under-Secretary, Mines Department, Wellington.

No. 10.

Mr. Inspector Gow to the UNDER-SECRETARY of MINES.

SIR,—

Nelson Creek, 27th March, 1888.

I have the honour to make the following report on my inspection of quartz and other mines, up to dates mentioned, in the Westland Mining District, West Coast:—

REEFTON.

1. *Keep It Dark Quartz-mine.*—This mine is now being worked at a level 500ft. below the surface, where the reef is very thick and of poor quality. All the working faces are dry, well timbered, and well ventilated. No safety-catches attached to cages yet, which I brought under the notice of the manager. He stated, as an excuse, that the ropes were quite new. With this exception the general rules are well observed. On the 28th of October, while I was in the mine, a new block of stone was found, supposed to be the continuation of the north block from a higher level, but I have since learned that it is not the north block the manager was so anxiously looking for. I have no doubt this block of good stone will be found shortly and that it will contribute largely to the prosperity of the district.

2. *Nil Desperandum Quartz-mine.*—At the time of my visit, on the 28th October, sinking the shaft was being done by contract. There was no mine-manager in charge; no fencing round the shaft, which is sunk from a chamber at the end of a tunnel (from face of hill) 300ft. in length; no safety-catches attached to the cage; no signals in the shaft; no weekly record-book; no copy of the Act; and no plan of mine kept at the mine. On the 29th I wrote to the legal manager, requesting attention to the requisite parts of the Act.

3. *Pandora Quartz-mine.*—I visited this mine for the first time on the 23rd September, at which time the shaft was being sunk and was then down 170ft. Poppit-heads were up but not roofed in. A new portable-engine had then been up two weeks doing the winding. On the 6th February I again visited this mine, and learned from Mr. Edward Lawn, the mine manager, that the shaft was now down 296ft., and that at 280ft. a chamber was then being cut out and being timbered. At 286ft. deep the reef is 2½ft. thick, with a good show of gold. The work is being done by three shifts of six men each. There is a little water, which is lifted by a water-tank. This shaft, I am told, is intended to work three mines, viz., No. 2 Keep It Dark, Pandora, and South Wealth of Nations, the Pandora being the centre one. The reef is generally supposed to be a continuation of the old Keep It Dark or Nil Desperandum Mines. The stone coming out of these mines for a time is to be crushed at the Wealth of Nations battery, which is only a few hundred yards distant, and there being a good dray-road all the way to it. All the winding-gear, large buckets, &c., usually used in sinking shafts are still in use. Preparations are being made to use a cage, which I saw on the ground, without a safety-catch attached. I spoke to the manager of the necessity of complying with the Act.

4. *Big River Extended Quartz-mine* (13th December, 1887).—This mine is nineteen miles south from Reefton, and is being worked from a tunnel driven into the hill from the head of a small gully, where alluvial gold was obtained many years ago. The stone is conveyed by an aerial tramway to the battery, situate on the Big River, distant about half a mile. The crushing-plant of ten stamps is driven by a Pelton wheel. There were only five stampers working on the day of my visit, in consequence of the scarcity of water, which I understand is quite a common occurrence. This loss of time has suggested the desirability of constructing a reservoir where there is a very suitable spot at no great distance up the stream from the battery. All the workings in the mine are quite dry, well ventilated, and safely timbered. The reef runs from 2ft. to 6ft. thick, but cuts into blocks of various