

The next claim adjoining the King Solomon's Mine is the Alice Fell. The company who hold this ground have been steadily at work for a period of two and a half years, and have never yet got any gold. A shaft was sunk on the opposite side of the creek from the township, but it was bottomed on a shelving reef dipping quickly away towards the creek. After sinking in the reef for some distance a drive was put in towards the creek, but it soon got into drift, showing that the deep ground was still further on. This shaft was abandoned and another one sunk to a depth of 80ft., a considerable distance of this being in the reef on the side of the creek where the township stands. When the reef was touched in this shaft it was found to be shelving away in the same direction as formerly, showing the deep ground to be still further to the northwards. After driving in all directions from this shaft to prospect the ground, and being unsuccessful in finding anything payable for working, another shaft was sunk further to the northward to a depth of over 100ft., the last 38ft. being in the reef. The company opened out at the 94ft. level, and after driving for 16ft. lost the reef again; but the character of the wash-drift showed that they were getting near the deep ground. At the end of the 16ft. a monkey-shaft was put down for 6ft., and from this a piece of gold about 2dwt. in weight was found, but at the time of my visit there was nothing definitely known whether they were in the gutter or not. The character of the wash-drift is similar to that found in the King Solomon's Mine, and probably they may be on the south edge of the gutter. During the two and a half years this company have been at work they have sunk five shafts and driven about 800ft. without getting anything to pay them for their expenditure and labour.

There is another shaft lower down the flat than those in the Alice Fell Claim, which was sunk by the Mahakipawa Company; but it is by far too much to the southward for any chance of meeting with the gutter. The workings have been suspended, and are not likely to be resumed until the Alice Fell Company get payable results in their ground. The future of the field depends a great deal on whether the gold runs down into the flat; but even if it is proved to do so the extent of the field is not great, and the area of ground that can be worked will only give employment to a limited population. Gold has been found in White Pine and some of the adjacent gullies, but never in large patches; still, there is a probability of getting it on the other side of the range. The same old schist formation can be seen cropping out near the head of Kaituna Valley, and in that valley there is a probability of a lead being found; but the ground is likely to be a good depth, and also it is likely there will be a good deal of water to contend with. This line of country passes the head of the Kenepuru Sound, and is again met with at Jackson's Head, and along it a payable goldfield may at any time be discovered. The schist in this belt is different from that further to the southward on the West Coast, the laminations being more quartzose, resembling the schists found about the Clutha Valley and the Shotover River. If further discoveries are not made in this district the present claims will soon be worked out, and, although there may be a small population for some time to come, the principal claims will be worked out in two years. There is a possibility of ground being got on the side of the range that would pay for sluicing, if water was brought from the head of the creek; but ground-sluicing operations cannot be commenced until after all the creek claims are worked out. On the Waikakaho side of the range some heavy pieces of gold have recently been found near the head of one of the branches, and some good patches have been got in the main creek; but gold was never traced into the deep ground, where it begins to widen out into a flat.

It is estimated that about 3,000oz. of gold has been produced from the Mahakipawa Goldfield during the past year, which shows a satisfactory result for the number of men employed. There was about 100 men working in the claims at the time of my visit.

WAKAMARINA DISTRICT.

Very little mining is carried on here. A few men are employed above the Forks, but no finds of any consequence have been made. At the time of my visit work was proceeding in the Gorge Claim, near the junction of Deep Creek. Dams were constructed at both ends of the gorge, and a tip of crib-work constructed at the lower end, from which there is an inclined tramway, where the trucks are hauled up by the same steam-engine that works the pumps. The water is lifted and kept down by two draw-lift pumps about 9in. in diameter. These were lifting the water about 33ft., and the manager stated that the gorge when full of water could be pumped out in about forty-eight hours. There were six men employed in lifting the shingle at the lower end of the gorge; but at the time of my visit in March last they had not got down deep enough to get at the gold-bearing wash-drift.

This gorge has been tried year after year with no success, and, judging from the manner in which the operations at the time of my visit were being carried on, it would take a very large quantity of gold to pay for the outlay. To successfully test this gorge the working should be carried on with as many men as could be advantageously placed in two shifts, as the river is subject to heavy floods which fill up all the excavations, and in the event of a flood taking place the stripping has to be commenced afresh. Three different companies have tried to work this gorge and have expended something like £10,000. The present company deserve credit for their perseverance, and the manner in which the dams are constructed and the river turned, but they do not appear to be able to conduct their operations successfully in river-workings.

RIMU AND BACK CREEK, WESTLAND.

There is a large extent of auriferous drift in this locality which would give profitable employment to a large population if a good supply of water could be brought on to the ground at a sufficient elevation, so that it could be worked by hydraulic sluicing; but this cannot be done except at a very large cost. The County Council had a reconnaissance survey made for a water-supply from the Hokitika River to command the ground in this locality, which was estimated to cost some £60,000, and, from my knowledge of the country through which a water-race would have to be constructed, even this large sum appears to be far too little. A water-supply, to be of