

the timber and scrub to be felled and cleared for, say, 20ft. wide, and the soft places corduroyed with fern-trees, which could be done for about £60. This would allow the miners an opportunity of testing the ground before incurring any further expenditure in the construction of a proper road or track.

NELSON DISTRICT.

Collingwood.

This was the first alluvial goldfield opened in the colony, and a considerable quantity of gold has been obtained from it. Some very rich deposits have been worked, but in general the gold is distributed through the wash-drift, and can only be profitably obtained by working the ground by hydraulic sluicing with a large supply of water. In the beds of the different gullies, creeks, and rivers, gold was found richly disseminated through the wash-drift by the process of concentration performed by flowing waters carrying away the light sands and material, and leaving the denser particles behind. Therefore, in all auriferous drifts we find the heaviest deposits of gold in beds of streams and ancient watercourses; but, in order to make the general auriferous wash-drift deposited on the hills and table-land pay for working, the same principle of concentration has to be adopted.

There is a belt of country covered with auriferous drift, extending from the Quartz Ranges to the ocean beach near the mouth of the Parapara River, having a large fissure or slide filled with auriferous drifts to a great depth in some places. This slide crosses the Rocky and Slate Rivers, and passes through the head of Golden Gully, Lightband's, Appo's, and Glengyle Gullies, crossing the Parapara River, and the Parapara Flat on the east side of the mud-flat. Indeed this slide, or fissure, seems to be the principal source from which the auriferous drifts in the different gullies have come, and from which a great deal of gold will yet be obtained; at the same time, although there is a large area covered with these drifts, the ground is by no means rich. But, with a good supply of water, and a properly constructed hydraulic plant, the ground can be made to give handsome returns.

Notwithstanding that Collingwood is the oldest goldfield in the colony, no improved appliances have ever been used in working the alluvial drifts. The reason of this is obvious. The other goldfields as they were opened up gave such large returns at first that they absorbed the whole of the mining population in the colony. Only those who had either highly payable claims or had not sufficient means to follow up the new rushes would stay on the field at this time, for even in the most palmy days of the goldfields there were amongst the miners men who would give away or spend the money as fast as they made it, and sometimes had they not the means to go to new fields especially when the distance was considerable and passage-money by sea-going vessels in those days expensive. Be that as it may, the fact remains that there does not appear to have been any men left in the Collingwood District with energy, perseverance, and sufficient capital to bring in a large supply of water to work the ground in a systematic and economical manner. Neither have those persons who have been employed on this field for many years had an opportunity of visiting other portions of the colony where improved hydraulic sluicing is carried on.

Some three years ago Messrs. Adams, Logan, and Gilmer took up some ground on the Parapara Flat, a portion of which is leased from the Natives. Adjoining this they hold a special claim of 100 acres, which has since been amalgamated with some freehold land belonging to Mr. Travers, and a strong influential company has recently been formed to work the ground with a working capital of £20,000. A survey of a water-race has been completed from the Onakaka and Paramahou Creeks at an elevation of 700ft. above the flat. It is reported that at least ten sluice-heads of water can be got from these creeks in the driest weather. This race-line is about fifteen miles in length, and is estimated to cost with hydraulic plant about £25,000. Since the survey has been completed the present company have purchased the water-rights and claim belonging to a private party working at Glengyle Gully, for £2,300. This gives them the second water-right from the Parapara River for twelve heads of water. Since this purchase they have bought the whole of the Red Hill Company's properties and water-rights from the Parapara River, which now gives them the first right to about twenty-four sluice-heads of water, which will make their mining property an extremely valuable one.

There is a large supply of water in the Parapara River for about eight months of the year, but during the middle of summer in a dry season there would not be above from fifteen to twenty sluice-heads of water available. The company having now purchased the first and second rights of water from this river they intend to lift the water from this source, and bring it on the ground. Another survey will now be made with the view of having this done, in order to ascertain at what elevation the water can be brought in.

The payable nature of this ground depends entirely on the supply of water that can be brought on to it and the elevation that the water-race is constructed at. The greater the elevation the more valuable the water-supply will be; but in any case it should not be less than from 300ft. to 400ft. above the ground proposed to be worked, as the greater portion of it will have to be lifted with a hydraulic elevator. Some portion of the top material can be sluiced off in the ordinary manner, but this only forms a small portion of the auriferous drift in the company's ground. Therefore, to insure good returns a large supply of water is required at a high elevation. Several prospects—the results of tin-dishfuls of drift said to be promiscuously taken from the ground—were given to me, and according to the quantity of gold from these prospects, the ground should be highly payable for working by a systematic method; but in taking prospects from the ground, it is almost the same as sending auriferous and argentiferous ores to be assayed. It may be said to be almost impossible to test samples where the appearance of metals or minerals does not exist; and in taking a tin-dishful of stuff here and there through the ground, it is hardly possible to get those who are directly interested in the venture to wash material where gold is not likely to be found, hence the average of prospects given to a disinterested person to weigh and